Chronicles
December 2002 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE $3.95

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Living a full life in a dying age

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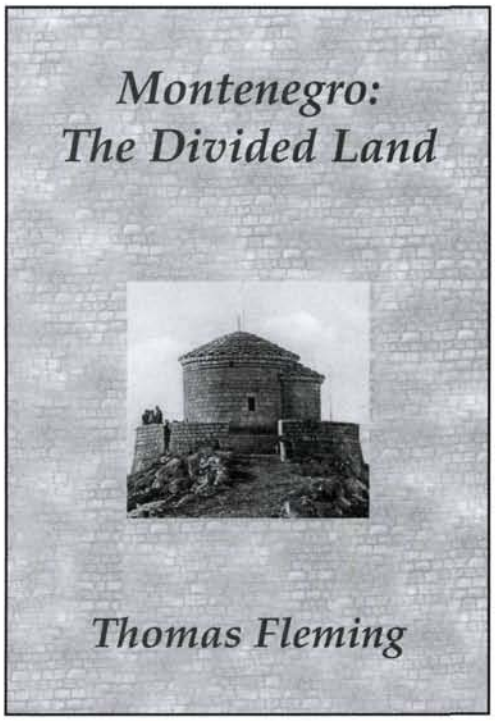
This Time, Be Prepared

The Serb land of Montenegro is once again at the crossroads of history. The blood-soaked mountains and dramatic coastline of this small land have been fought over by Illyrians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Turks, and Venetians, and, in the 20th century, by the armies of Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Germany. In World War II, Montenegro lost more men, per capita, than any nation of Europe, and now it is the latest target of the so-called international community, which has tried to create a phony separatist movement (complete with a bogus national church) to continue the disastrous policies that have involved the United States in wars over Bosnia and Kosovo.

Thomas Fleming has written the first well-researched history of Montenegro in the English language, taking the story from ancient times all the way up to the current crisis over separation from Serbia. This is no dry academic tome but a lively account of a brave people whose brave history rivals the tales of Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae.



"Dr. Fleming has given us an unbiased history of our people that is compact yet thorough, with all the characteristics of a serious, well-documented, scientific study."

—Slavenko Terzic
Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences

"Dr. Fleming's book is a fascinating account of the heroic struggle of the Montenegrin people to defend their freedom and liberty against all odds. It tells their magnificent story in a stirring narrative that combines scholarly research with astute observation of how this tiny nation today may yet face its greatest challenge."

—James Bisset
Former ambassador to Yugoslavia
from Canada

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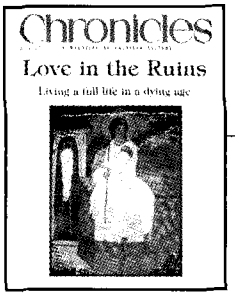

Chronicles

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On Commie Education

Congratulations to Srdja Trifkovic for his excellent article in your September issue ("A Communist Education Remembered," *Views*). It is not only courageous in the present circumstances but completely accurate, both in the details and, of course, in its underlying philosophy of education.

Let me reassure Dr. Trifkovic: This underlying vision has survived in Budapest, where I have been teaching philosophy and philosophy of religion for the past 12 years, every fall semester. At the two universities where I teach, both state institutions, the students are well prepared by the *gymnasium*; Dr. Trifkovic would recognize in classroom and corridor the same spirit and the same preparation that he remembers so well and with gratitude—not only the curriculum but the moral conviction so indispensable for learning. I am speaking of an elite; but is that not what we mean by *students* when we speak of serious education?

—Thomas Molnar
Budapest

On Education and Alienation

I would like to commend B.K. Eakman for her superb piece, "Bushwacking Johnny" (*Vital Signs*, September). It is the first thing of hers I have read, and I am most impressed by the way she has captured the essence of the moral and spiritual crisis in education today.

I am a college professor, a baby boomer, and in an esoteric field (Chinese literature). Yet I am also a warrior, like Mrs. Eakman, fighting when and where I can the trends self-designated as "postmodernism" in "higher" education.

Bad as it is on this level, it is even worse when "educators" do what Mrs. Eakman describes with ten-year-olds. (My granddaughter is ten; we are raising her as best we can.)

—Jonathan Chaves
Washington, DC

I wish to draw Mrs. Eakman's attention to one error in her otherwise excellent article. Karl Marx's theory of alienation has nothing to do with avoiding social ostracism and ridicule. Marx's theory is an economic one; he argues that the exploited factory worker undergoes dissociation from the product of his labor. In the previous handicraft tradition, a worker created an entire object from start to finish and, therefore, had a personal investment in it as an expression of his own being, which also brought him economic gain. The factory worker, by contrast, monotonously performs a single routine task repeatedly (think of Charlie Chaplin tightening an identical set of bolts on each item coming down the assembly line in *Modern Times*), a small, impersonal and unidentifiable contribution to the overall product, and he is robbed of the usufruct of his labor by the economic exploitation of the capitalist manager/producer. Consequently, he becomes alienated not only from the product itself but from the entire economic and social order of capitalism that produces it. Alienation indirectly contributes to the development of "class consciousness" insofar as workers become mutually aware of their state of alienation and exploitation. Perhaps Eakman mistakenly jumped from this to a supposition that alienation refers to formation of class consciousness because members of a Marxian socioeconomic class fear being seen as not belonging to their class, leading to ostracism and ridicule.

I would also raise a question about Mrs. Eakman's use of the dilemma facing the woman considering abortion of a deformed child. I am not sure that the woman always receives the second message (about being a bad person if she kills her baby) and experiences the resulting cognitive dissonance (of being a bad person whether or not she aborts). In today's pro-abortion culture, she seems far more likely to receive a second message of positive reinforcement: "If I abort my baby to prevent horrific suffering for it, I am being kind and merciful. Therefore aborting my child makes me a *good* person, and allowing him to be born and suffer so terribly would make me a bad person."

—James Altena
Philadelphia, PA

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Mrs. Eakman Replies:

Let me address Mr. Altena's second concern first: It is true that many women never receive the message "you are a bad person if you kill your baby"; women who *do* receive both, however, definitely risk a state of cognitive dissonance, because both messages are very strong and contradict each other. So, without going into the moral or ethical ramifications of either message, I merely observed that unless such a woman can default to one set of beliefs, she is a candidate for suicide. Thus the importance of *having* a firm set of beliefs, established usually in adolescence or before. The lack of one is the source of what many refer to as "mental health" issues.

Regarding Mr. Altena's observation concerning Marx's theory of alienation: Basically, he is correct regarding Marx's economic theories, which were his initial contribution to what became known as communism. Once Marx's theories started being applied to psych-war attack strategies against the West in the post-Stalin era, however, Marx's economic theory of the alienated worker morphed into a political theory of the alienated citizen. This is where my comment came from. One book in which this theory is applied is *Social Psychology and Propaganda* (1984), translated and printed in English by the Moscow Institute for Social Research and confiscated by our troops in Grenada during the Reagan era.

On Culture War Strategies

Many thanks for Roger McGrath's, Joe Guzzardi's, and Myles Kantor's pieces in your September issue. Rather than heaping lofty, obscurantist scorn on various currents, they actually wrestle with glaring, concrete issues, which suggests proper strategies for waging the culture war instead of merely talking about it. For instance, it does no good merely to criticize allies when they are generally in your favor and only need instruction rather than backbiting.

Mr. Kantor (*Cultural Revolutions*) raises specific objections to Title VII and the "Employment Non-Discrimination Act" that lie at the very roots of our current confusions. Solution? *Repeal*!

Dr. McGrath ("Tales From the Politically Correct Crypt," *Views*) tells of the familiar authoritarian/reform-liberalism now infecting the once-mighty university, from whence issue indoctrinated, ignorant, unread graduates who need instruction in Western civilization.

And Joe Guzzardi ("Ignorance Is Bliss," *Reviews*) reveals the glaring irony of the times, the total ineptness of the regnant Fourth Estate, who, along with their academic peers, have abdicated their traditional responsibility to "refine and enlarge the public views" by instruction. (My local paper, the *Fresno Bee*, exemplifies the ultraleft bias he reports.)

What is missing in the public, political, academic, and journalistic arenas these days is the adherence of a generally intelligent people to even nominal standards of truth and excellence. With age and study came wisdom and discretion—nuanced "discrimination" so often emphasized by those like Irving Babbitt yet abhorred by today's pundits, liberal and conservative alike. Instead, equality, relativism, revisionism, opinions, fleeting sentiments and emotions, "compassion," and ignorance are now the rule.

What is to be done? We must build on what remains; generate an overall effort based on truth; and never merely resort to nagging criticism, resentment, and division. Allow for informed initiative.

Thanks again for these three pieces.

—*W. Edward Chynoweth*
Sanger, CA

On Fingering Terrorists

Philip Jenkins was right about the absurdities involved in the anthrax investigation ("The Butler Didn't Do It," *Breaking Glass*, September), but I see two other reasons why many seem determined to find culprits other than Middle Eastern terrorists.

Many on the left are uncomfortable with ethnic villains. Frequently, they view non-Westerners as spiritually superior. While outraged by September 11, it was difficult for them to focus rage on perpetrators who sprang from a minority. By the time of the anthrax attacks, they had had it. Couldn't *that* at least be the work of a right-wing nut? They view most of the American public as inveterate xenophobes and racists who would no doubt launch a homegrown *Kristallnacht* if atrocities always seemed to be springing from one particular quarter. Many even saw flag waving as the first step in that direction.

Officials in investigative agencies fear the odium that will be heaped on them if they focus on the likely suspects. Who wants to be remembered as another J. Edgar Hoover after seeing what has been done to his memory? If the anthrax attackers are not Islamic terrorists, you do not have to focus your anger on a potentially reputation-tarnishing target. No one will call you a fanatic. After all, anyone can be a terrorist.

If enough people are brought around to this point of view, it will not seem so hysterically insane when some suspender-wearing septuagenarian has his loafers checked for bombs at the airport.

—*Garth Gould*
Tucson, AZ

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TERRORISTS are wreaking havoc all around the globe, and it is obvious that Al Qaeda is alive and deadly, if not well. Thus, the Bush administration is faced with a stark choice: Focus on protecting Americans by continuing the fight against terrorism, or risk American lives by setting the world further aflame with an unnecessary war against Iraq.

The world has become a very ugly place. A murderous bombing in Bali, Indonesia. Plans to hit U.S. embassies in Southeast Asia and Europe. An attack on a French oil tanker off of Yemen. A failed plot against Saudi oil facilities. Shootings of American soldiers in Kuwait. Bombings in the Philippines. And the arrest of terrorist wannabes in Portland, Oregon, and Buffalo, New York. CIA Director George Tenet warns: "You must make the assumption that al-Qaeda is in an execution phase and intends to strike us both here and overseas."

Throughout the Muslim world, hatred for the West continues to grow. Palestinians and Israelis are at war. Fundamentalists made dramatic electoral gains in Pakistan and Turkey, both American allies. A new report by the Council on Foreign Relations charges that Saudi Arabia, another ally, has done little to stop the funding of Al Qaeda.

In such a world, attacking Iraq would be like sloshing gasoline from the Mideast to Southeast Asia. It would not take much of a spark to ignite a bloody conflagration.

Why is the Bush administration fixated on Baghdad? Obviously, Saddam Hussein is a bad man. But the United States has routinely befriended nasty actors: Turkey has treated her Kurds no better than has Iraq, and a Christian woman would be better off living in Iraq than in Saudi Arabia. Baghdad has attacked its neighbors, but it is contained and constrained, far weaker today than in 1990. That is not likely to change anytime soon.

Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran in war and, perhaps, against the Kurds in civil war. Worrisome? Yes, but Saddam only used these weapons against adversaries who were defenseless. By contrast, the United States possesses 6,000 nuclear warheads.

Saddam is trying to develop nuclear weapons. He's not alone, however. North Korea has just admitted an ongoing program. Iran and other states have pursued them. Moreover, Saddam could not use nukes against the United States or Israel if he had them, lest he face swift retaliation. Saddam is wicked, not suicidal.

Still, we are warned: He might use those weapons to preclude the United States from attacking him. Yet a world in which Washington feels free to bomb any country at any time is frightening. The United States spent the entire Cold War facing a nuclear-armed Soviet Union that constrained its actions.

The most serious argument is that Baghdad's possession of nuclear weapons could result in even worse terrorism. Al Qaeda, however, thinks little better of secular Arab dictators than of Western democracies. Daniel Benjamin, a former staffer on the National Security Council, calls Iraq and Al Qaeda "natural enemies."

Saddam is not likely to turn the crown jewels of any weapons program over to a group that he does not control—especially since doing so would risk exposure. Indeed, he would be immediately suspect if "weapons of mass destruction" are ever used against the United States by terrorists—and the city of Baghdad would likely cease to exist.

The problem of loose nukes is far worse elsewhere. Pakistan possesses nuclear weapons and apparently aided the North Korean nuclear program.

Equally frightening, however, is what war with Iraq might bring. If there were any circumstance in which Saddam would loose—on both America and Israel—whatever chemical or biological weapons he possesses, it would be if the United States attempted to remove him from power.

Moreover, any war would divert resources from fighting a resurgent Al Qaeda—at a time when, warns Tenet, "the [terrorist] threat environment we find ourselves in today is as bad as it was last summer, the summer before Sept. 11."

Attacking Iraq is also likely to reduce cooperation with Arab states and, perhaps, European and Asian ones as well. Yet their help is needed in order to crack down on local terrorist cells and stem the flow of funds.

Even if the power of the "Arab street" is often overstated, the Pakistani election demonstrates Muslim anger against the West. To oust Saddam while seeing the government of Pervez Musharraf fall to extremists would be a losing bargain.

And we must consider the aftermath of war in Iraq itself. Even if a U.S. victory generated dancing in the streets of Baghdad, a permanent U.S. military occupation might be necessary to hold that artificial country together.

The struggle between Kurdish and Shiite separatists, squabbling expatriates, and various domestic factions, along with potential belligerent actions by Iran and Turkey, would be a wonder to behold. Nation-building in Afghanistan would be simple in comparison.

In the end, the Bush administration is pursuing a strategy in which Iraq and the terrorist attacks of September 11 are merely a convenient excuse. The United States is to play an imperial role, crushing any government or movement that desires to escape Washington's control.

It is a breathtaking agenda, outlined in a new White House strategy document—an agenda that means perpetual war, increased military outlays, a return to a Cold War-style security state, and perhaps even the reinstitution of conscription to man the necessary "nation-building" garrisons around the globe. It is an agenda for an empire, not a republic. And it is a strategy that guarantees a long-term, concerted campaign by other nations to counteract American power by means fair or foul. India's development of a nuclear arsenal is but one example.

Consider, also, China's warming relations with India, Indonesia, and Russia. Growing criticism from Europe. Greater independence by Japan. None of these countries wants to live in a world where everything Washington says goes.

There is no more fundamental duty for the government than to protect its people from outside threats. Unfortunately, as President Bush himself admits, "We've got a long way to go" to defeat Al Qaeda. Yet his administration is preparing to increase vastly the danger to Americans and their friends abroad.

—Doug Bandow

WILLIAM "HOOTIE" JOHNSON, age 71, poor man, has fallen afoul of public opinion and sensibilities, for which

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the consequences thus far were entirely predictable: the scorn of the best newspapers; hospitalization for a coronary-artery bypass, an aortic aneurism repair, and an aortic valve replacement; now, news of restlessness on the part of the natives.

Might not any of us expect something similar after instructing the National Council of Women's Organizations to go—please, ma'am—to the hot place? Augusta National Golf Club, site of the prestigious Masters tournament, didn't wish to offer itself as another candidate for cultural and political intimidation.

Every institution stuffed with white males, symbols and enforcers of the Old Order is, nowadays, a candidate for intimidation. In Augusta National's case, the offense was failure to admit women as members. The NCWO, with an estimated six million members through 160 groups, sent a letter to Hootie, in his capacity as Augusta chairman. The message: *It's time for a change*. "We know that Augusta National and the sponsors of the Masters do not want to be viewed as entities that tolerate discrimination against any group, including women."

Hootie gained national attention for replying with, shall we say, acerbity. *No way, lady*. Augusta National would not be "bullied, threatened, or intimidated." This from a white man with an impressive civil-rights record that has been accorded at least glancing attention, mostly as a source of ironic commentary. July became Beat Up on Hootie Month, and it went on from there.

Let 'em in, demanded the commentators. *No way*, Hootie repeated, dropping all three sponsors for the 2003 Masters, lest the NCWO lean on them to lean on him. The incredulous looks spread. What was this, a golf club or Jurassic Park? By late September, the *New York Times* reported, with a look of satisfaction, various club members were trying to iron the thing out and spare themselves further embarrassment.

The question of Augusta National membership is one properly of supreme indifference to nonmembers. You would suppose if, in a land of liberty, Augusta National, or any other private association, chose to admit only cross-eyed Fiji Islanders, that would be the members' prerogative. On its self-selection policies, the association would stand or fall. This quaint manner of proceeding is known as the free-market approach. It is no bad idea.

Why do private organizations no longer qualify for free-market discipline? Because, in modern America, personal validation has come to trump almost everything else. Americans exist, it would appear, to be affirmed: built up, patted on the hand, protected from low self-esteem.

We all remember the scandal of a couple of years back when the Boys Scouts declined to accept homosexuals who wished to be identified as such. The scouts, a noble and historic organization, got jerked around by the lanyard. Didn't they understand homosexuals wanted in?! Yes, they understood. Then why couldn't homosexuals get in? Because letting them in, to tout their gayness, would have undermined the Scouts' moral commitments. A thing like that came before making particular nonmembers happy? Well, yes, it did; and, in due course, the federal courts, who had been dragged into this thing, agreed with the Scouts. A private, character-building organization had nonetheless been exposed to ridicule and unnecessary expense, all because it wanted to defend its essential identity.

Back to the matter of women as members of Augusta National. Should they be allowed to become such? *Why not?* most Americans would likely reply, *provided that's what the present membership desires*. And if the members don't desire? We will need, in that case, someone to explain why the historic right of association has been shanked into the woods; why "opportunities" and "positive feelings" have come to preempt others' asserted right to their own preferences.

There is about it all something of the beneficent tyranny of the fifth grade—the little animals made, not to bash and scandalize and insult one another, but, instead, to play nicely together. Careful, teacher is taking names.

Has it come to this—modern life as the fifth grade reconstructed and given cultural force? It might not be the worst thing that could happen. In the fifth-grade zoo, the animals are kept at least from mauling each other. Do-gooders and hand-patters have their undoubted value in a society—like ours—where strong passions contend strongly with one another.

And so have the Hootie Johnsons their special value. Too much do-gooding, too much nicely-nicely, tends to chafe. When a Hootie Johnson plays bad boy—sticking out his tongue and his chest—the impulse is to applaud.

Hootie is an old coot, a so-and-so of genius. This is a profound reason to hope his heart gets back to ticking soundly so that he may go after his would-be intimidators with hammer and tongs. There aren't enough of his stubborn like in this pallid, back-patting, hand-holding, esteem-building age. Long may he rave.

—*William Murchison*

A U.N. RESOLUTION concerning weapons inspections in Iraq made October a month for hard bargaining among Washington, Paris, and Moscow. Washington and London both desired a resolution that would allow the automatic application of force should Iraq obstruct any proposed arms inspections. Paris and Moscow balked, but by mid-October it appeared that both the French and Russians were prepared to accept a U.S. proposal allowing for further Security Council consultations before any attack on Baghdad could be launched.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov explicitly stated that Moscow might agree to the use of force against Iraq if Baghdad interfered with arms inspections. Thus, the United States appeared to be offering a face-saving option for the Security Council, one that brought the United Nations into the Iraq equation (after President Bush had already signed Congress's resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq, an implicit threat to act unilaterally if the Security Council would not compromise).

But the real story of the Iraq resolution bargaining probably had less to do with the Security Council's view of the position and status of the United Nations than it did with the economic interests of France and Russia, both of which have staked a claim in developing Iraq's oil fields—and both of which were very concerned that U.S.-based companies would drive them out in the event of "regime change" in Baghdad.

A U.S. presence in Central Asia (a U.S.-backed oil-and-gas pipeline, to be routed through Afghanistan and Pakistan, is in the works), Washington's interference in Georgia (a prime pipeline route for transporting Caspian Sea oil and gas, bypassing Russia), and possible occupation of oil-rich Iraq by the Americans might cut cash-strapped Russia out of any future OPEC-busting hydrocarbon alliances. So Russia threatened war with Georgia and attempted to obstruct any U.S. plans for an immediate strike on Iraq, moves most pundits saw as part of an elaborate game through which Moscow

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hoped to gain a stake in the New Hydrocarbon World Order envisioned by Washington.

October saw the Putin regime bargaining hard (*torg* in Russian) over what was really bugging the Russian president: oil, the state budget, Russian relations with the Arab world, and economic opportunities in the West. Among the *torg*-related events were a 48-hour blitz visit to Moscow by Tony Blair, who told reporters afterward that "the Russians are ready to approve" some "pretty tough language" in a revamped U.N. resolution; talks between the Saudi finance minister and Russian officials over "developing trade and economic relations" between the two countries; a Putin meeting with Moroccan King Mohammed VI, focusing on Iraq; an announcement that the United Arab Emirates was interested in purchasing an air-defense system from a Russian firm, which was viewed in Moscow as a sign that the United States and Great Britain were ready to let Russia in on the lucrative Persian Gulf arms market; the removal of Russia from the international Financial Action Task Force's money-laundering blacklist, possibly a U.S.-U.K. bone tossed to Putin's Kremlin; Russian oil executives' attendance at a Houston oil-industry summit, where U.S. officials hinted they might view Russia as an alternative (to OPEC) oil supplier; a discussion of "regime change" in Baghdad between Russian and Kuwaiti officials; media reports that the United States and Britain were prepared to pressure Moscow's Western creditors to write off Russian debts; and U.S. protests over Moscow's alleged nuclear-research cooperation with Syria.

Meanwhile, Sergey Kukura, vice president of Russian oil giant Lukoil, was released by his kidnappers even as the hydrocarbon *torg* proceeded. Kukura, as reported by Denis Petrov (*Cultural Revolutions*, November), was kidnapped in September—and the Moscow rumor mill claimed that the oil executive was the victim of wrangling among Russia's oil oligarchs, some of whom allegedly wanted Lukoil, which has an interest in Russia's Caspian Sea oil-and-gas projects and owns the rights to develop Iraq's largest oil field, to pursue a line of cooperation with the United States. And it is possible that those oligarchs who are interested in breaking into the U.S. market may have had something to do with the bizarre Kukura saga: Some sources claim no ransom was paid for Kukura's release, and Lukoil President Vagit Alekperov, who attended the Houston oil summit, has refused to comment on the episode.

—*Wayne Allensworth*

PALEOCONSERVATIVES often refer to "the limits of permissible dissent" in describing the struggle to hold on to their views in the realms of the media and academia against the censure of both the left and the "mainstream" right. Now, this struggle has been extended into the realm of the internet, the supposed last frontier of unregulated speech and capitalism. Indeed, we may be witnesses, as Frederick Jackson Turner would say, to the closing of this frontier, not just because of the collapse of the dot-com economy but because of the new limits imposed on speech and content, which will only become more pronounced as the War on Terrorism progresses.

In 1996, Fresno, California, resident and internet surfer Jim Robinson had a problem: His posts on Prodigy message boards and chat rooms, particularly his strong criticisms of President Bill Clinton, were being censored by Prodigy's administrators. So he started his own website—*Free Republic* (*www.freerepublic.com*).

Free Republic was more than just an ordinary message board in the early settlement of the internet. Surfers could post whole articles from publications and make them topics of discussion and debate. And it was more than just another chat room. *Free Republic*'s likeminded members could be connected from across the country to organize activist projects and events. In 1998, when many Republicans wanted to ignore Kenneth Starr's report on the Clinton scandals rather than deal with its charges, *Free Republic* members (or "Freepers," as they call themselves) lit up the congressional phones and organized demonstrations that influenced Republicans in the House to vote for articles of impeachment. And it was the Freepers, not the GOP, who organized the demonstrations of conservatives down in Florida during the 2000 presidential vote recount.

Over 60,000 people have been registered members of *Free Republic*, the largest conservative-oriented website in the world. Members are a diverse lot: independents, Republicans, libertarians, (large "L" and small), neocons, paleocons, Buchanan Brigaders, Keyes supporters—and everything in between. Even such prominent pundits as Justin Raimondo, Ann Coulter, Barbara Olson, and Lucianne Goldberg (known by her Freeper handle, "Trixie,") have made frequent posts.

As in any frontier boomtown, however, with rapid growth came predictable problems. Some of the articles posted on the site came from racist or antisemitic websites. Conspiracy theorists also made use of *Free Republic*. Leftists began to infiltrate the site, posting articles or posing as conservatives to act as *agents provocateurs*. "Vanity posts" became more frequent, and flame wars among members became more intense, as the site split into factions during the 2000 presidential election. Overall, civility degenerated. Some members became concerned that *Free Republic* had become a virtual hangout for kooks. Matters came to a head in early 2000 when Robinson (or "JimRob") speculated on George W. Bush's connection to the airport in Mena, Arkansas, where drug- and gun-running allegedly took place during the 1980's. Matt Drudge then dropped *Free Republic*'s link from the *Drudge Report*, and Goldberg took 2,000 members with her to start her own *Lucianne.com*.

Robinson decided to clean up his website and, like any good sheriff, deputized a posse of site moderators to remove offensive posts, threads, and articles and to ban those who posted them. But they did not stop there. Soon, they had banned the posting of any articles from certain websites that they deemed taboo, such as *VDare.com* ("too divisive"), *LewRockwell.com*, *DixieNet.org* (the League of the South's website), and the Free State Project's website (*www.FreeStateProject.org*).

It would be easy to conclude that Robinson and his monitors simply went overboard in an effort to clean up the excesses of *Free Republic*, but there is more to it than that.

Because of its significant growth, *Free Republic* costs $240,000 annually to maintain. As a non-profit, *Free Republic* depends on donors, large and small, for its survival. No doubt the embarrassment of being dropped from the *Drudge Report* and Goldberg's public break with the site concerned Robinson, and he feared that funds might dry up if his site were perceived to be on the fringe. In addition, the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* sued *Free Republic* for copyright infringement. (The case was settled out of court.) It was only natural for Robinson and his site administrators to want to look good for prospective donors.

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With so many posters banned, the diversity of thought on *Free Republic* has been reduced to the musings of neoconservatives, Zionists, Republicans who act as if *Free Republic* were an annex of GOP headquarters, those who consider George W. Bush a demigod and offer daily prayers to him, and other sycophants and cheerleaders. Robinson has made it clear where he stands: "I see that the only Party capable of blocking and defeating the evil Democrats is the Republican Party. I see that many races are so close that as little as a one percent siphon of conservative votes to a third party could be the difference between success and failure. I see allowing a Democrat to remain in power when it could have been prevented as a triumph of evil."

Many banned Freepers have turned to such sites as *Liberty Post* (*www.libertypost.org*) and *Liberty Forum* (*www.libertyforum.org*), where members can post articles from anywhere and comment without interference from the thought police or fear of Siberian banishment. But *Free Republic* will still remain the 800-pound gorilla of conservative websites for some time, just as *National Review* has been for conservative magazines, despite being watered down. Frontiers, whether on land or in cyberspace, cannot survive when developers start plotting out the fencerows.

—*Sean Scallon*

SERBIA's recent presidential election failed to muster enough votes to be valid. Only 46 percent of voters cast ballots in the run-off between current Yugoslav president Vojislav Kostunica and his rival, Miroljub Labus. Kostunica beat Labus by a two-to-one margin, but, without the minimum turnout of 50 percent, the outcome was void.

What happens next is uncertain. In theory, the whole procedure should be repeated within 60 days, according to legislation inherited from Milosevic's time. In practice, however, there may be difficulties. If voters could not be motivated to turn out sufficient numbers for the first runoff, there is no reason to believe that things will be different in late December. The full extent of Serbia's economic misery and collective depression will be more painfully felt under the leaden winter sky, deepening the sense of alienation from politics, and the futility of its proceedings, so keenly felt by most Serbs.

On the other hand, if the 50-percent requirement introduced by Milosevic is to be removed, it will be necessary to draft the necessary legislation and bring it before the Serbian parliament within days. The majority in the assembly, however, is controlled by Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic and his allies in a dozen microscopic parties. That control was enhanced by Djindjic's expulsion of deputies belonging to Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) on a spurious pretext—a move that even Djindjic's foreign backers find hard to defend. If Kostunica is reinstalled as president, he is certain to call a new parliamentary election. Since Djindjic and his allies would fare badly at the polls, they are not likely to do anything that would place Kostunica in a position to dissolve parliament.

An ongoing power vacuum at the top suits Djindjic and his allies, enabling them to continue running the government by default. Djindjic's ploy was evident in his Democratic Party's (DS) quiet sabotage of the second round of voting. He may come under some pressure from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which monitored the elections and said that the law should be repealed. Such pressure would never be effective, however, unless Djindjic were given some guarantee that he would retain a position of power and influence. Western diplomats in Belgrade point out that, regardless of the outcome of a future parliamentary election, Djindjic's DS will likely remain the only coalition partner for Kostunica's DSS: "The alternative is to make a deal with Seselj's Radicals or Milosevic's Socialists, and Kostunica knows that he cannot even contemplate such a move without losing what little Western support and credibility he still enjoys."

Another failed election would further erode Kostunica's credibility and effectively leave him without a job: The post of the federal head of state will become purely ceremonial, and subject to rotation every six months, once the new constitutional platform regulating relations between Serbia and Montenegro is enacted. If there is another electoral flop, Djindjic could resort to another constitutional trick inherited from Milosevic: He could install the temporary speaker of Serbia's parliament—a nondescript woman from one of the miniparties allied with him—as acting president of Serbia for a period of up to one year, while the new legislation is being drafted and debated.

For a cynic such as Djindjic, devoid of moral scruples, the possibility of extending his rule over Serbia for a year may prove irresistible, especially if his long-suffering subjects remain apathetic. But, as we saw in the streets of Belgrade two years ago, Serbian apathy may easily turn into rage.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

OBITER DICTA: Our first poet this month is **Richard Moore** from Belmont, Massachusetts. Mr. Moore is the author of nine books of poetry, as well as translations of Plautus and Euripides, a book of literary essays, and a novel, *The Investigator*. His most recent book of verse, *The Naked Scarecrow*, was published by the Truman State University Press in 2000. Mr. Moore conducts The Poetry Exchange in the Harvard COOP and gives frequent readings in the Boston area.

Our second poet this month is **Alfred Nicol**. His poetry will be included in an anthology titled *Contemporary Poets of New England*, edited by Robert Pack and Jay Parini. His work has appeared in the *New England Review*, *Atlanta Review*, the *Formalist*, *Rattapallax*, *Pivot*, and *Commonweal*. A member of the Powow River Poets, he lives in Amesbury, Massachusetts, where he teaches poetry and creative writing at Sparhawk School.

This month's inside illustrations are provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

The ***White Angel*** of this month's cover is a fresco painting from Mileseva Monastery near Uzice in western Serbia. The monastery was built in the early 14th century by Stefan Vladislav. Within the narthex of Mileseva, Vladislav deposited the bones of his uncle, St. Sava, the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In the long centuries of Turkish oppression, Mileseva was a source of inspiration and hope to Christian Serbs. The Turks burned down the church several times and even dug up the saint's bones in 1594 and burned them at the stake in Belgrade. The sacrilege ignited a series of uprisings against the brutality of Islamic rule. The *White Angel* remains a symbol of hope to the world's beleaguered Christians.

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by Thomas Fleming

Boethius and/or Cassiodorus

American conservatives used to be fond of saying that the United States have entered a decadent period something like that of the Roman Empire. Since American conservatives do not read history, they were never very clear on the period they had in mind, but let us assume they mean the third century, when the empire was up for sale to the highest bidder, when gangster armies fought over the spoils of the empire, when Oriental emperors such as Elagabalus stained the city's ancient streets with vice unknown in the more wholesome days of Nero and Caligula.

Apart from the disorders, however, the empire was not a lost cause in the third and fourth centuries, largely because of the solid virtues of the class that produced the officers and bureaucrats who organized the defenses, kept the roads and aqueducts in repair, and maintained some semblance of public order. We who live in the age of *The Osbournes* can hardly afford to sneer at an age that produced St. Augustine and St. Ambrose or Julian and Ammianus Marcellinus.

Alas, we are not living in the age of Caligula or Commodus or even in the age of Honorius and Arcadius, Theodosius' two incompetent sons. This is not the period before the collapse of civilization: In a moral and cultural sense, at least, the collapse has already taken place. Like the collapse of the Roman West, the modern West's failure has been a gradual process, and, like the proverbial frog in the kettle, we have so gradually grown used to the heat that we are hardly aware of the bubbles boiling around us. On a spiritual level, the collapse began perhaps 500 years ago, but on a cultural and moral plane, the stench of decay was already perceptible before the first World War.

Poets, though not the legislators of mankind, are the secular prophets who are the first to realize and declare what is going on, and the poets of the teens and 20's—Eliot, Pound, and Jeffers—were clear: Civilization was almost extinct. Pound, lamenting the mass slaughter of the Great War, puts it succinctly:

> There died a myriad,
> And of the best, among them,
> For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
> For a botched civilization.

The proper place to look for parallels is not in the declining years of the Roman Empire but in the period after the barbarian takeover of Italy, Gaul, and Britain, when no one knew exactly what to expect except for a steady deterioration of what we jokingly today refer to as the "quality of life." During this Gothic period, from Alaric's sack of Rome (in 410) to the death of Cassiodorus (about 580), the task of civilized Romans was to stay alive, hold on to their property, and pass down some of their institutions to their descendants. From any perspective, whether of cultural or even material survival, the future was not bright.

Though the West was becoming increasingly Christian, this was no Golden Age of the primitive Church. When an open war broke out in Rome over who would sit in the chair of St. Peter, the pagan prefect told the winner, Pope Damasus, that he would gladly turn Christian if only he could have the wealth and power of the Pope. It is a mistake, perhaps a heresy, to imagine that any church was ever any different. Mankind being what it is, the Church was corrupt even in the time of the Apostles—as is revealed by the story of Ananias and Sapphira and by St. Paul's constant complaints about moral disorders and dissensions. Even in Jesus's time, his followers quarreled over precedence and over priorities, and one of them, perhaps in disgust at Jesus's refusal to lead a social revolution, betrayed his Master. In many significant ways, the Church, during Her first millennium, improved more than She deteriorated.

Though Romans had nominally ruled the West down to 476, real power was exercised not in Rome but in Milan and Ravenna, whose degenerate rulers hardly cared what happened to the Eternal City. Alaric's sack of Rome was a terrible shock to the world, and when Emperor Honorius, who was a poultry fancier, heard the news that *Roma* had been destroyed, he broke out in grief and astonishment, thinking that his prize rooster named *Roma* had been killed. "I just saw her this morning," he complained. Once his courtiers reassured him that it was only the city, he felt a good deal better.

Italy finally lost the pretense of Roman rule once Odovacar the German deposed the last puppet emperor in 476. Odovacar attempted to preserve the structure of the empire and kept the imperial tax system and Roman officials in place, reserving the right to relax taxes whenever he wished to do a favor to a friend or gain popularity. Neither he nor Theodoric, the rival who murdered him, was up to the task, however. The economy was in shambles; agriculture, in ruins. Skilled trades were disappearing from want of work, and greedy barbarians were swarming in to take over farms they did not intend to work.

Much of what Theodoric did in Italy was a continuation of Odovacar's policy: exercise power through the Gothic soldiers and keep the administration going, wherever possible, by making use of Roman officials like Boethius and Cassiodorus. The Goths were assigned a full third of the lands. There were roughly 200,000 fighting men, whose numbers, filled out by women and children, must have added up to a million—a small number, really. In those days, there was not much assimilation among the immigrants. Few Goths learned Latin, and virtually none could read. The king approved of their ignorance: "A child who feared the schoolmaster's rod," declared Theodoric, "would never wield the sword." He also seems to have adopted the strategy of divide-and-rule—he was the only man who could control both the Goths and the Romans. Although he is praised for his astute statesmanship, Theodoric could never have succeeded in establishing a stable kingdom in an Italy divided into two nations.

Theodoric and most of his Goths were Arian heretics, denying the full divinity of the Son of God, but although the Arians were well known as vicious persecutors of their more numerous Catholic rivals, Theodoric was wise enough to attempt moderation, though he did intervene in Church affairs and even nominated a pope in Ravenna rather than in Rome. He exasperated Catholic feelings when he compelled an entire community to re-

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pair the damages to Jewish property that had resulted from a riot, and, in the controversy that followed, the king ordered the Chapel of St. Stephen in Verona demolished. Later in life, Theodoric began to fear that his Roman subjects were more fearful than loyal, and he took steps to disarm the Italian populace; moreover, he was always willing to hear accusations made by the suspicious Goths against distinguished Romans. Theodoric's brutal paranoia is responsible for the most famous crimes that stained his regime.

The king showed his greatest prudence in selecting distinguished Romans to staff his bureaucracy. Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was heir to the last patrician family of republican Rome, the Anicii. As a Manlius, he claimed descent, however implausibly, from the legendary heroes of the early republic, such as Manlius Torquatus. Boethius was born about 480 to a family as wealthy as it was distinguished. His father had been consul under the last emperors, and he was to be consul under the Goths. He married a descendant of the great jurist Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, and he lived to see his sons made joint-consuls in 522.

Although a hardworking public servant, Boethius was best known as a writer and scholar. His was the last generation to have a command of good Latin, and he excelled his contemporaries. He also learned Greek, though the story that he studied in Athens may well be fiction. In a last-ditch effort to preserve the Hellenic inheritance in an increasingly monolingual Italy, he translated important Greek works on music, geometry, astronomy, theology, and—perhaps most importantly—the logical works of Aristotle, which are the indispensable foundation for all systematic science.

Boethius was the most prominent Roman in public life, gaining positions of consul and patrician and *magister officiorum*—something like chancellor or prime minister. He was no mere creature of Theodoric or toady to the Goths. He intervened to save the lives of Romans unjustly attacked by the barbarians and, in his policies, attempted to relieve the provinces of the crushing burden of taxes, robbery, and exploitation imposed by the Goths.

We shall never know what was going on in Boethius' mind during those years: a civilized man, preserving and translating Aristotle, organizing what was left of the imperial administration, while putting up with the unwashed and intemperate barbarians who ruled Italy by the sword. From one point of view, both he and Cassiodorus were collaborators with the enemy, but, like the leaders of Vichy France, they were making the best deal they could under the circumstances. He must have known, or ought to have known, that barbarians can never be trusted. They might be honorable in their own way, true to their code, but they are—as Aristotle would have said—*akrateis*, not in control. A barbarian is prey to his passions—greed, lust, gluttony, drunkenness, arrogance—and many Goths found it inconceivable and disgusting that a civilized and just Roman should wield so much authority.

Two years after the doting father witnessed his sons' inauguration as consuls, he was accused by resentful Goths of plotting to restore the authority of the only remaining emperor—Justin, the elderly but competent uncle of Justinian. The Goths had reason to be afraid. As soon as Justinian took the throne, he began planning a campaign to restore Italy—which he did—and an educated Roman born in 480 could hardly be blamed for sighing after the good old days. However, we simply do not know if Boethius was guilty even of treason in the heart.

Here is the case. Albinus, a Roman senator, was accused of hoping for a restoration of the liberty of Rome. Boethius defended him with the rhetorical commonplace of free men: "If Albinus is guilty, then so is all the Roman Senate including me. If we are innocent, Albinus is entitled to the same protection of the laws that the rest of us enjoy." The emperor drew the wrong conclusion, and a document was found or manufactured, inviting the emperor to conquer Italy, signed by both Albinus and Boethius. Boethius was thrown into jail in Pavia, not far from Milan. The charge of practicing magic—the only basis of which was, apparently, his philosophical studies—was added to harm his reputation among Christians. Without a trial or a hearing, Boethius was pronounced guilty, and 500 miles away in Rome, a servile Senate, as Gibbon says, "pronounced a sentence of confiscation and death against the most illustrious of its members."

The sentence was carried out in the cruelest fashion imaginable: Cords were twisted around his skull, tighter and tighter until his eyes began to pop out. Some Goth must have taken pity, because Boethius was finally clubbed to death. His father-in-law, Symmachus, mourned his loss too openly, and he was dragged in chains to Ravenna, where he was executed. He was the great-grandson of the pagan Symmachus who had argued for the restoration of the Altar of Victory removed from the Senate house by Gratian. Now, his worthy descendant shared the religion of his ancestor's opponent, St. Ambrose.

Boethius has been called the last of the Romans, and with good cause. His pursuit of humane learning, decent Latinity, and civic virtue was not to be found again until Petrarch. His most important successor, Cassiodorus, wrote wretched Latin and treated the classical inheritance only as a propaedeutic for the education of priests and scribes. Though medievalists might celebrate the transformation of Latin into a simpler language, the loss of balance and structure and precision was symptomatic of the deeper loss of those qualities in all aspects of the culture of the early Middle Ages.

Anyone who has watched the language of Eliot and Waugh and Mencken degenerate into that of Adrienne Rich, John Grisham, and everyone who writes for the *New Republic* and its "conservative" clones in New York will know how to interpret the loss of clarity and purity.

The American character has been corrupted, from top to bottom, from Ken Lay to Larry King. No grassroots populist rebellion against Washington can change that. A hundred thousand principled and educated men and women, on the other hand, would constitute a revolution, but that revolution will not be hatched in public or private schools but in the institutions that can still be saved: the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, for example, where good intentions are not always matched by sound learning; or in the military academics, where, if the women were expelled and standards raised, a generation of clearheaded warriors could be reared; in the business schools that should be requiring a humane education instead of courses in "business ethics" named after criminal Wall Street manipulators; and in every home, where parents can cut the plugs off the television set and game machines and read grown-up books to their children.

As individuals, we cannot change, much less save, the world, but, as members of families and parishes, schools and businesses, we can help our children and colleagues take a giant step backward toward civilization.

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Oswald Spengler

by Richard Moore

He said that mathematics was an art
and won my heart;
that cultures die; the sign of death, a Caesar—
O, what a teaser!—

and once they're dead, stay dead. No one's at home
in Ancient Rome,
that took grand Greece with it. And how divine a
pattern for China?

Nothing in China for TWO THOUSAND years,
decadent dears . . .
O yes, Tang art, then Buddhism . . . but then
Tao becomes Zen,

and nothing really changes, nothing's new. . . .
Nothing is true
everywhere all the time; everything grows,
rooted, for those

who see deeper than logic, learn to hate your
dead laws of nature.
Hey, was it Spengler speaking there, or me?
Easy to see . . .

I had to have thought-countries rich and strange
where I could range,
as once, among wild thoughts of our black maid,
I skipped and played,

and hoped someday to live down the disgrace
of my dead race,
as if I'd grasped the strangeness of my portion,
I, failed abortion.

Mother felt guilty. Drugs she took, the dear,
had made me queer.
But no, they gave me Spengler, made me blest
in our dead West.

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by Roger D. McGrath

The Modern Myth of the Black Cowboy

"Nigger Charley" Tyler rode the range of the Owens Valley in the trans-Sierra country of California during the early 1860's. He was one of the hired hands of the ranching McGee family, who grazed their beeves in the valley and then drove them north to market at the booming mining camp of Aurora. Paiute Indians, living in the valley and subsisting primarily on pine nuts and grass seed, found the new food source irresistible and began rustling cattle. Tyler was one of dozens of cowboys from several ranches who tried to stop the thefts. Fights erupted, and both Indians and cowboys were killed. Then, in an ambush, Tyler was captured by the Paiute, bound securely, and secreted at a remote location.

To Paiute, Tyler was a special prize. They later explained that they easily recognized this one cowboy and identified him as having been in several earlier fights because he was black. Not only was he the only black among all the cowboys, but he was the only black they had ever seen. Now, they would make him pay for those earlier fights. They tortured him for three days, then roasted him to death.

That there were black cowboys such as Charley Tyler is not to be denied. (I told Tyler's story in a book I wrote about the mining camps of Aurora and Bodie.) However, that blacks accounted for a significant percentage of cowboys is a politically correct myth. I have watched this myth develop and grow during the last 30 years until it is now *de rigueur* to claim that 20 or 25 or even 30 percent of all cowboys were black. Much of this began following the 1965 publication of *The Negro Cowboys*. UCLA English professors Philip Durham and Everett Jones argue that popular literature about cowboys rarely mentioned black cowboys, although they not only existed but participated in good numbers on the long drives from Texas to the cattle towns of Kansas.

The authors include numerous anecdotes about black cowboys that were not new at all, having been mentioned in several works dealing with cowboys going back to the turn of the century. They also estimate that nearly 20 percent of the cowboys who drove the herds north from Texas were black or Mexican. This is where the fun really began. First, the Mexican component of the estimate was soon ignored. Then, the fact that the estimate only applied to cowboys on the cattle drives from Texas was ignored. By the mid-1970's, it was said that 20 percent of all the cowboys of the Old West were black. By the 80's, the figure had reached 25 percent. An otherwise excellent documentary, *America's Music: The Roots of Country*, has musician Marty Stuart matter-of-factly stating that a quarter of all cowboys were black. The movie *Posse* (1993) was accompanied by a promotional flyer that claimed 30 percent of cowboys were black. The Black American West Museum in Denver states on its website that "nearly a third of the cowboys of the West were black."

If anyone challenges these wildly inflated figures, he is called a racist. My own research has led me to conclude that, in the cattle country outside of Texas, it was uncommon to find more than a few black cowboys. In Montana, where there were thousands of cowboys, the federal census of 1880 records only 346 blacks—men, women, and children—in the entire territory. Similar figures can be found for the Dakotas and Wyoming. The cattle regions throughout the rest of the West also had a dearth of blacks.

But what of Texas in the post-Civil War period, when slaves were freed and used as cowboys? Terry Jordan, in an outstanding work of cultural geography, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers* (1993), provides demographic data that puts the percentage of black cowboys in Texas in the single digits. Jordan, for example, notes that

> Runnels and Callahan counties, representative of the north-central Texas region, by 1880 housed, respectively, 118 and 177 Anglo-American cowboys, but not a single black cowhand. Wichita County, farther north on the Red River, in that year boasted the greatest concentration of black cowboys on the Texas cattle frontier, a total of 15, but even there the African-Americans were greatly outnumbered by the 67 Anglo herdsmen. In all West Texas in 1880, only 4 percent of all cowboys, excluding camp cooks, were black while Anglo-Americans accounted for about 9 out of every 10. Subsequently black ranch hands never became common anywhere in the West . . . in spite of exaggerated claims to the contrary.

The most exaggerated claims about black cowboys are found in Nat Love's supposed autobiography, *The Life and Adventures of Nat Love* (1907). If he actually wrote it, it is the only known autobiography of a black cowboy. Love's exaggerations are all about himself: He was almost everywhere in the Old West and palled around with many of the famous figures of the frontier, including Billy the Kid; he was captured by Indians but escaped, used his lariat to save a drowning cowboy from a raging river, was adopted by an Indian tribe, survived 14 different bullet wounds ("any one of which would be sufficient to kill an ordinary man"), had horses shot out from under him, killed men in gunfights.

Books about blacks in the West never fail to mention Nat Love. What they do not tell the reader, however, is the mere fact that there is no independent confirmation of anything in Love's autobiography. Nat Love can only be found in his own book. Ramon Adams, in *Burrs Under the Saddle: A Second Look at Books and Histories of the West* (1964), says, "Although this Negro author is supposed to be writing of his own experiences, he either has a bad memory or a good imagination." We do, however, know one thing for certain: Love did spend time on the frontier—he was a porter on a railroad that ran through the West.

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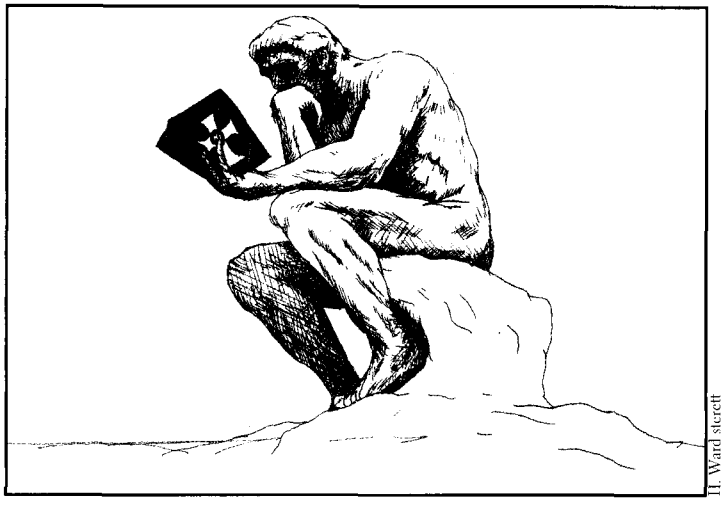
Boethius and Lady Philosophy

First Things First

by James Patrick



As founder of the intellectual tradition of the West, Saint Augustine has one peer: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, a Roman of noble antecedents who spent his life in the service first of literature, then of the Gothic kingdom of Theodoric, and always, throughout a life that compassed literary success, high office, and political disgrace, of the Catholic faith and the Lady Philosophy, his figure for the philosophic wisdom of the West.

The political story that shaped Boethius' life began in 324, when Constantine's plan to move the capital of the empire from Rome to the city of Byzantium, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Marmora, matured. By moving the capitol, Constantine unintentionally left the West defenseless at the moment when barbarian pressure and influence became irresistible. In 476, the emperor Romulus Augustulus was deposed by the soldier Odovacar, who governed until 486, when he was defeated by Theodoric, an able Arian Ostrogoth educated in Constantinople. Theodoric's capital, Ravenna, became the first city of Italy.

For the senatorial class into which Boethius was born in 480, the move from Rome to Ravenna brought little change. Theodoric, like Odovacar before him, was an insistent tax collector, but he left in place the senatorial class, with its customary access to office and honors. Though an Arian, Theodoric tolerated Catholic families, and they, in turn, continued to dominate Italy, repaying Theodoric by calling him *Rex Theodoricus Pius Princeps Invictus Semper*.

Ostrogoth dominance segregated Italian society; the Roman class of "those who mattered most" staffed local administration, while the Goths controlled the army. No Roman was allowed to enter the army; no Goth was allowed to enter a Roman school. The most troublesome division, however, was not between Roman and Ostrogoth but between Catholic and Arian. The Arians tolerated Catholics but never trusted them. They admired the senators and used them, but Catholics were only rarely and reluctantly admitted into their families.

Constrained by Ostrogoth power, Byzantine neglect, and Arian heresy, Boethius' world was anxious but usually not unsafe. In an insecure time, when *romanitas* was threatened but not yet defeated, it was the custom of the class that possessed memory to write down the things remembered. Around 430, Vincent of Lerins had written his *Commonitorium*, typifying the tradition that would make copying the practical sign of the monastic life, and, three centuries later, the Venerable Bede, in his *History of the English Church and People*, noted that he had depended upon "countless faithful witnesses who either know or remember." Memory was the bridge between the dying empire of Augustus and the revival of learning in the ninth century.

Boethius' father died when Boethius was a boy, so he was reared in the household of the powerful senator Symmachus. Boethius fell to the literary life naturally; the time was ripe. The philosophy of Aristotle in its relation to Plato and to neoplatonism was a dominant theme at Athens, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. Boethius' surviving works must be seen against a background of a lively philosophic tradition represented by Porphyry, Iamblichus of Calcis, and Plutarch of Athens and his pupils Hierocles and Proclus the Lycian. Boethius himself translated Aristotle's *On Interpretation*, *Categories*, and *Topics* and commented on Marius Victorinus' translation of Porphyry's *Introduction to the Categories*. Philosophy, reason's perennial engagement with truth, was derivative but not sterile. By 507, Boethius (not yet 30) had written extensively on Aristotle and the liberal arts. Later, he would write short theological treatises and, at life's end, the *Consolation of Philosophy*.

When Boethius wrote the *Consolation*, he was in prison, with the near certainty of death always before him. Thus, many have

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wondered why he did not locate his expectations in the company of the saints and martyrs, choosing, instead, to see his plight as another example of the persecution of true philosophy, analogous to "the flight of Anaxagoras, the poison of Socrates," and "the torments of Zeno." Another great-souled prisoner, held captive a thousand years later by another king of great power and doubtful orthodoxy, wrote the *Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*, an appeal to the passion of Christ. That Boethius' choice suggests he was not a Christian is an argument now abandoned, as is the complementary contention that the author of the *Consolation* could not have been the author of the theological treatises *On the Trinity*, *On the Catholic Faith*, and *Against Eutyches*. But this hardly answers the question.

Boethius turned instinctively not to the flower of the Catholic life that he had defended, nor to Christian doctrine, which he considered indisputable, but to the root of that life and that faith—reason. Reason was Boethius' first defense; his enemies' unreasonableness, the sign of their sure defeat. The first book of the *Consolation* traverses the precincts of Stoicism and Platonism, always abjuring the answers that the Catholic faith might give in favor of the answers of Lady Philosophy. Boethius' practice perpetuated the great tradition begun by St. Justin Martyr, who, having become a Christian about 150, set down the proposition, "Whatever is true belongs to us Christians." The divine *Logos*, Justin argued, was so dispersed throughout Creation that the Greek philosophers might properly claim some share in the truth. From the beginning, Socrates, who believed intermittently in the immortality of the soul and in something like eternal life, was irresistible to Christians, who saw him as a martyr for the truth.

The insistence that a life pleasing to God might begin in reason made Christianity an indomitable world religion to which nothing human would ever be a stranger. The educated world was left with the problem of stating precisely the relation between nature and supernature, reason and faith, philosophy and theology. Christian teachers might have attempted to spiritualize philosophy by confusing the Holy Spirit and the world-soul, creating something that, viewed in one way, was a vast rationalism and, viewed in another, seemed to make the world a theodicy and mankind divine. Or they might have construed a separation between natural wisdom and sacred doctrine and created a kind of double-truth scheme in which things true in philosophy and nature might have no relevance at all to sacred doctrine and the supernatural life. Instead, they chose the pattern later summarized by Saint Thomas: Grace does not destroy but perfects nature, with nature understood to have its own created goodness and to be responsive to the insights of reason.

Boethius' works became a treasure house for the Middle Ages, and four of the questions considered in the *Consolation* illustrate the continuity and creativity of thought that the dying age of imperial Rome bequeathed as an intellectual patrimony to the unseen future of Saint Thomas, Dante, and Chartres.

First, and most significantly, Boethius revisited the fundamental question, advising John the Deacon "if possible to join faith and reason" and implying that it is possible to do so without destroying philosophy or destroying faith. Boethius would, at one time, write (as in the *Consolation*) as though divine wisdom did not exist and, at another (in the theological treatises) as though philosophy had been given to mankind to subserve and clarify the teachings of the Church.

One of the greatest characteristics of Christianity is its reasonableness. Faith is rooted in a preparatory reason that sacred doctrine, in turn, perfects. Moreover, even Christian revelation is never unreasonable. Miracles, which represent the perfecting of Creation toward the eschatological order in which Christ is King, absolutely transcend human reason and powers, but these actions are nevertheless reasonable in a divine realm that exceeds our reason's grasp.

Today, the world is full of anti-Boethian religions of unreason. There is the unreason of the cults: "The leader is always right." More dangerous is the unreason of Islam. We find suicide bombing deeply unreasonable, but a community of 1.2 billion Muslims includes no insignificant number of teachers who find this superbly logical. The reason, of course, is that Allah is preeminently a will to which the wise submit. While Christians talk about God Himself being the *Logos*, the rationale of everything that exists, that is absent from Islam. Following Boethius, the West came to understand that philosophy could not simply be subsumed into God's Will.

Second, the problem of universals, an eternal fascination of the human intellect, found its place in Boethius' philosophy. Nine beings sit on the U.S. Supreme Court, and each of them is called "human"; yet no two of them are identical. Should we be called "human" because certain characteristics can be observed as belonging to each of us—two arms, two eyes, one head, speech? Or is there a metaphysical reality, indicated by these similarities, that underlies the differences?

This question is significant, for if the reality of my humanity is exhausted in the possession of certain empirical characteristics, I may cease to be human when those characteristics are absent. I may lose the power of speech, at which point my life could be proclaimed less than human and taken from me. Or, had I been conceived 60 years later, perhaps I might have been declared not to be human until I left my mother's womb. The question of the existence of universals or forms is more than abstract.

Plato first identified the problem in moving beyond the philosophy of the physicists, who sought in some material element the commonality of beings—fire, water, atoms, number—to the conviction that the real unity of similar beings lay in their ideas or in some universal predication. For Plato, the reality of the forms was to be found in some ultimate ground of reality located in a purely intellectual realm. Aristotle always said that he only differed from Plato over his own conviction that the forms existed in things themselves. The question remained: How are we to speak of these universals or forms or ideas that are known only in individuals yet bind all of reality?

Although he added significant qualifications, Etienne Gilson was right when he wrote that, by asserting that "They, universals, subsist in connection with sensible things, but we know them separate from bodies," Boethius did more than posit the problem; he solved it. The problems the philosophy poses can always be visited again, but whenever that problem of universals is considered, we end up back at Boethius, who gave the Middle Ages the foundation on which Saint Thomas developed the most explicatory epistemology ever proposed.

Third, Boethius dealt with the question of perfection. Discovering that which is better or best is part of being human. Philosophy moves out of a set of principles that mark the division between fruitful reflection and nonsense. One such principle is that of sufficient reason. The first sentence of Aristotle's *Ethics* is a kind of transformation of this principle: Aristotle writes that every art and every inquiry aims at some good; action is not purposeless, nor is nature. We presuppose purposes or

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reasons and, with them, reasonableness. If, at the end of the day, your Mercedes has been turned into a tiny pumpkin-like coach drawn by white mice, you will at least ask where the wizard is hiding and why he perpetrated this wicked deed. We cannot think apart from the principle of sufficient reason. Nor can we think apart from the principle of noncontradiction. We cannot inhabit a world in which beings can be themselves and some other thing simultaneously and in the same way. Nor can we think apart from something that might be called the "principle of perfection," which, in its basic form, is simply the assertion that something is better than something else.

If you repair to your doctor to be told that you have a rare and fatal condition that he proposes to use as the basis of a scholarly paper but does not presume to treat, you will change physicians, because we know that being is better than not being and that a physician who considers both health and disease interesting conditions between which he cannot judge is no doctor at all. This principle of perfection is assumed by Anselm in his famous argument that God is He than Whom no greater can be thought to exist and by Saint Thomas in his argument that belief in God is reasonable because, if something is better than something else, there must be some Being Who is best.

It was Boethius who, among few others, transmitted to the Latin Middle Ages the observation that, "if in any kind we find something imperfect, there must needs be something perfect also of the same kind. For if we take away perfection we cannot so much as devise how there shall be any imperfection." The longing in the human heart for Eden is not an illusion. We could not know the world as fallen or ourselves as broken unless Eden and the saints exist. If my use of the word *better* has meaning, it has meaning because there is, in fact, a best. Of course, our culture claims that all distinctions construe insufferable inequalities, but Boethius, speaking to the dying world of Gothic Italy, gave us a better principle.

Finally, the definition for which Boethius is most famous should not be forgotten. Attempting to write accurately and convincingly about Christ in *Against Eutyches,* Boethius found it necessary to say what a person really is. Many descriptions of what it is to be human—descriptions of faculties and characteristics—had already been written, but Boethius' contribution is a deceptively simple definition that became a commonplace of Western thought: A person is an individual substance of rational nature. In other words, a person is not merely an example or an abstraction. Individuals are not self-subsistent—only God is—but they are *themselves* and not some other thing. In that sense, there are no individuals in much of oriental thought. For Boethius, however, "only the single persons of Cicero or Plato or other single individuals are termed persons." And persons have a nature, a specific difference that gives form, and, for man, that form is rationality.

These four ideas, none radically original but all certainly more well known in the West because of their reiteration by Boethius, had before them a great future. Boethius knew that, if the battle were lost on the grounds laid out by Lady Philosophy, any victories won on the higher ground of revealed truth would be insecure. In a barbarian age, Boethius' works were a bulwark erected against such a consequence. Ours is another barbarian age in which the attack on reason has been pursued relentlessly, most successfully in the universities, which were intended as reason's castle. But again we find, beginning with Pope Leo XIII's great encyclical *Aeterni Patris* and bolstered by the letter of John Paul II entitled *Fides et Ratio,* an insistence that right philosophy is the foundation, albeit not the perfection, of every human good and, preeminently, of the Faith.

Viewed from Boethius' prison cell, the future of Roman civilization could hardly have looked bleaker than the future of our postmodern world, viewed from the prison of our poisonous subjectivity and relentless relativism. While there is no final victory in time, the future we call the "Middle Ages" belonged to Boethius. Tolkien, in one of his letters, addresses our inability to see what is really happening around us: "The future is impenetrable, especially to the wise; for what is really important is always hid from contemporaries, and the seeds of what is to be are quietly germinating in some dark corner."

The battle must not be forfeited, even in what seems to be a difficult hour. If reason's battle for the intellect is lost, the struggle for the souls of men and their civilization cannot be won, and, in the last seven centuries, the philosophical battle has been in the enemies' hands. Revelation was only defeated by a kind of reason that was, in itself, unreasonable. All the great contemporary moral battles are ones in which the contenders are not faith and unfaith but reason and unreason. The frantic efforts of the antilife apologists are mistakes in the realm of reason. The claim that a being begins as something not human is the denial that anything at all really exists, yet this is the argument of those who claim that a child only becomes human at birth. The claim that it is permissible to take the life of an unborn child for selfish purposes is both unreasonable and an injustice before it is a sin. The culturally besetting curse of homosexuality outrages reason and nature before it violates charity and purity, causing social destruction before it courts damnation. Even the much-despised teaching ensconced in *Humanae Vitae* was proposed to men of good will everywhere and without any reference to revealed truth, for the fact that it is unlawful for the highest purpose of an act conjoined in nature to some secondary good to be subordinated to that secondary good is true on its face. A man does not really need a theologian or a priest to tell him that using elephants for door stops and Mexican blue butterflies to make stew, though certainly possible and perhaps in some way pleasurable or efficient, are actions that mistake the justice, and hence the reasonableness, of the case.

If Lady Philosophy cannot touch the intellect, Christ can only with difficulty touch the heart. If it were true that Boethius wrote about philosophy because faith had deserted him, his works, especially the *Consolation,* would forfeit something of their relevance. But Boethius' local canonization in Pavia after his execution was not the foible of an uninstructed era. When Boethius knew that he, like his beloved Roman civilization and the little kingdom of Theodoric, had run out of earthly hope, he concluded his *On the Catholic Faith* with these words:

> All therefore that the faithful now expect is that the end of the world will come, that all corruptible things shall pass away, that men shall rise for future judgment, that each shall receive reward according to his deserts and abide in the lot assigned to him forever and ever; and the sole reward of bliss will be the contemplation of the Almighty. So far, that is, as the creature may look upon the Creator, to the end that the number of angels may be made up from these and the heavenly city filled where the Virgin's son is King, and where will be everlasting joy, delight, food, labor, and unending praise of the Creator.

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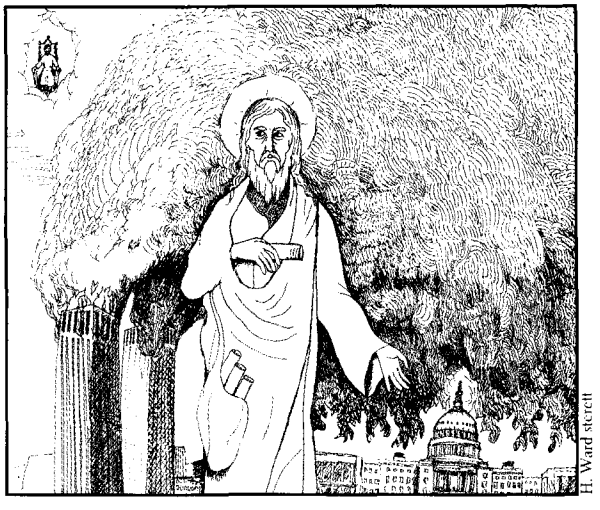
My Hometown

Augustine's *City of God*

by Aaron D. Wolf



Saint Augustine did not originally desire to be a pastor. When, in 387, he finally surrendered to the Holy Ghost in the garden of his "philosophers' estate" in the countryside outside Milan, he intended to follow the example of Saint Anthony and live a life of quiet solitude, separated from the temptations and trials of the world. In his *Confessions*, he recalls, "You converted me to yourself, so that I no longer desired a wife or placed any hope in this world but stood firmly upon the rule of faith . . . "

In converting to Christianity and agreeing to be baptized, Augustine was prepared to battle his flesh for the rest of his life, particularly against the concupiscence at work in him, as well as

> a certain vain and curious longing, cloaked under the name of knowledge and learning, not of having pleasure in the flesh, but of making experiments through the flesh. This longing, since it originates in an appetite for knowledge, and the sight being the chief amongst the senses in the acquisition of knowledge, is called in divine language, "the lust of the eyes."

This battle with the flesh and the eyes was, he believed, best undertaken in retirement, and Augustine returned to Africa in 388 to live as one of the "servants of God," a group of laymen devoted to studying the Scriptures and mortifying their flesh.

Three years later, when a middle-aged Augustine left his hometown of Thagaste for nearby Hippo Regius to seek support for his little religious household on his family estate, he was afraid of the very thing that ultimately happened to him. Hearing Bishop Valerius' sermon on the need for more priests in Hippo, Augustine found himself pressed by the mob of parishioners to the bishop's elevated throne, whereupon he submitted himself for ordination, weeping, believing that he was being judged by God for looking down upon clergymen as a philosopher. By 395, he would be consecrated as successor to Valerius, though, as he would later say, "I did not think myself the equal of those who ruled over congregations."

Such was the inner life of he who would be made a saint and doctor of the Church—perhaps the most significant mind to influence the Middle Ages. His life's work was conducted in the face of a dying age that spawned, among other things, the Donatist controversy, the Pelagian heresy, and a rebirth of paganism. Augustine responded to each of these crises as a pastor, and, in so doing, blessed the Church with wisdom and direction that speaks even to our own dying age. But he was able to do so because his work as a pastor was a reflection of his inner life—of his struggle against the "sin which so easily besets."

One aspect our dying age shares with Augustine's is the elevation of rhetoric (however debased) over the other liberal arts. His was a litigious age, when style was more important than substance. Even farmers could make use of rhetorical skills, for it was only a matter of time before you might be hauled before a judge (or a bishop) over a property dispute. Thus Augustine, the son of an upper-class Roman, was sent to the academy to learn the indispensable art of rhetoric. "It was my ambition," he admits, "to be a good speaker, for the unhallowed and inane purpose of gratifying human vanity."

Though Augustine developed a fascination for the theater at a young age, and could make others weep at his recitation of poetry, his heart was captured by higher things when he read Cicero's *Hortensius*, an exhortation to philosophy. Later, when Augustine described his conversion to Christianity, he lamented that "many years of my life had passed—twelve, unless I am wrong—since I had read Cicero's *Hortensius* at the age of nineteen and it had inspired me to study philosophy." Clearly, Au-

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gustine believed the study of philosophy had elevated his mind toward the consideration of things divine, though it had also helped to feed his vanity and had provided a diversion from the call of Christ to take up his cross and follow.

When Augustine arrived in the "Rome of Africa" as a young man, he quickly found it to be a sort of Sin City. Everywhere in Carthage, there were enticements designed to inflame the lust of his flesh, and, he later laments, he often succumbed. It was not uncommon for upper-class young men to take comfort among prostitutes or to have a mistress of lower birth; Augustine was guilty of both. He had, on the one hand, a burning guilt in his heart, fueled by his mother Monica's admonitions against lasciviousness and her desire for him to become a Christian; on the other, the guilt of one whose heart longed to cultivate a love of wisdom but was constantly diverted by temporal things. "My God," he confesses, "how I burned with longing to have wings to carry me back to you, away from all earthly things, although I had no idea what you would do with me! For yours is wisdom. In Greek the word 'philosophy' means 'love of wisdom,' and it was with this love that the Hortensius inflamed me." Yet Augustine recognized that philosophy only turned his mind away from the lust of the flesh and toward "the lust of the eyes," an attempt to understand everything—history, metaphysics, morality—apart from

> the name of Christ. For by your mercy, Lord, from the time when my mother fed me at the breast my infant heart had been suckled dutifully on his name, the name of your Son, my Saviour. Deep inside my heart, his name remained, and nothing could entirely captivate me, however learned, however neatly expressed, however true it might be, unless his name were in it. So I made up my mind to examine the holy Scriptures . . .

Throughout his life—thanks, in part to philosophy, and, in greater part, to his mother's witness to the Gospel—Augustine centered himself on things eternal and found his ultimate citizenship—his real hometown—in Heaven, the City of God.

Even though he would be distracted by Manichaeism and by a brief attempt to live among friends as a philosopher in the Milanese countryside, the seeds planted by his mother and watered by Saint Ambrose and Saint Athanasius' life of Anthony flowered in the Milanese garden and brought him to Ambrose's baptismal grotto, where, alongside his illegitimate son, Adeodatus, he was marked indelibly with the Name of God.

In 410, Bishop Augustine, away in Carthage, received a letter from his friend, the Latin theologian and translator Jerome:

> There are many who go halting upon both feet, and refuse to bend their heads even when their necks are broken, persisting in adherence to their former errors, even though they have not their former liberty of proclaiming them. . . . Jerusalem is held captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and refuses to listen to the counsels of Jeremiah, preferring to look wistfully towards Egypt, that it may die in Tahpanhes, and perish there in eternal bondage.

This cryptic letter was a veiled reference to the sack of Rome at the hands of Alaric, the Gothic mercenary. Jerome, taking up the mantle of the weeping prophet, laments that many Christians in Rome have turned to the paganism of their fathers for comfort rather than bow their broken necks in humble submission to Christ—in the same way that the sons of Israel pined for the leeks and garlic of Egypt while wandering in faithless disobedience in the desert. Augustine was aware of the crisis, though his immediate correspondence to his faithful flock in Hippo simply reveals his concern that he had received news that they were no longer providing garments for the poor.

Over the next few years, Augustine would feel the weight of this event on his diocese. Boatloads of upper-class Romans fled the Eternal City for North Africa. Many of them owned summer homes and estates in Carthage, Hippo, and Thagaste; they resigned themselves to living permanently in what once was their granary. When they came, they brought with them their spiritual longing for Egypt, and thus began a rebirth of a sophisticated philosophical paganism that leaned heavily on the writings of Plotinus and Porphyry—Augustine's old friends from his former life of philosophy.

This was the crisis for which Augustine had been preparing his entire life. His response was his *magnum opus*, *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos* ("Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans"), which gave shape to the Middle Ages and calls out even to our dying age.

Augustine's primary audience was those who were turning to philosophy or to a literary paganism, blaming Christianity for the fall of Rome. In addition, however, were those who might not have left the Church but might, nonetheless, be so focused on interpreting the signs of the times that they had lost sight of the power and majesty of Christ's continued mission, through His Church, to "gather together unto Himself a people out of every tribe and nation under heaven." The first group saw the fall of Rome as sure evidence that Christ's Kingdom had failed and that Constantine had been mistaken in believing that he had conquered by the Sign of the Cross. The second simply had doubts about what the future might hold for the Church, as if Alaric's sack of Rome meant either that the plan of redemption had been frustrated or that the end was near.

The *City of God* comprises two parts: an attack on paganism and philosophy and a vision of the Eternal City that transcends the rise and fall of empires on the world stage. It is, to a great extent, Augustine's *Confessions* writ large. Rather than describe his own struggle for salvation, however, Augustine writes of the salvation of Christ's Bride, the Church, whose destiny was settled before the foundation of the world.

"In recounting these things," Augustine notes,

> I have still to address myself to ignorant men; so ignorant,

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indeed, as to give birth to the common saying, "Drought and Christianity go hand in hand." There are indeed some among them who are thoroughly well-educated men, and have a taste for history, in which the things I speak of are open to their observation; but in order to irritate the uneducated masses against us, they feign ignorance of these events, and do what they can to make the vulgar believe that those disasters . . . are the result of Christianity . . .

Christians, Augustine notes, were not promised protection as a physical nation or people but spiritual protection—salvation—as citizens of the Heavenly City. Even the nation of Israel only received divine protection insofar as she served as a type and shadow of the Church. When the prophet wrote "*Ichabod*" over Judah, the glory had already departed and, with it, divine protection. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar was free to sweep away a generation of Israel's sons.

While attacking the pagans, Augustine reserves his most powerful weapons for the philosophers, who, as he once did, allowed the "wisdom" of the Platonists to distract them from the wisdom of Christ. The chief problem of the Platonists, says Augustine, is that their metaphysics leads them to locate evil not in the will but in matter. Augustine was well acquainted with this error, as he himself had been led astray in this regard. It is easier to blame your state of existence—for which you have no direct responsibility—than to admit that your evil desires flow from your soul, that immaterial part of you that the Platonists believed merely to be trapped in an evil body.

For the Platonists, the Incarnation was unreasonable, since God becoming Man would mean that God had become corrupt, having entered the physical world. Augustine, interestingly, does not argue as if pure reason can convert the philosophers but recognizes that the Gospel is necessary in order to break the bonds of sin in which the philosophers' reason has shackled them. Because of his own experience, He understood that every man is a sinner needing forgiveness and that the philosophers' rational rejection of the Incarnation was really the product of a sinful heart trying to drown out the voice of God.

In the second part of the work, Augustine elaborates the contrast between the City of God and the City of Man. The City of Man represents all of this world's government, the works of evil men, controlled by the devil, the realm of Cain, that which the Apostle John had in mind when he said "love not the world." The City of Man has been dominated by several empires—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome—and would be dominated, no doubt, by several more. The City of Man, typified for his audience by smoldering Rome, has been destined to dominate the world stage from the Fall until Christ returns "again in glory to judge both the quick and the dead." Its empires do not depend on the piety of pagans but on the will of God, who "causeth the rain to fall on the just and the unjust." And just as sure as He gives power to one prince, He will, in His time, take it away and hand it to another.

The Church is the City of God, whose members find their citizenship chiefly in Heaven, not in the City of Man. As the world crumbles around them, they are not shaken. They should not be caught up in plumbing the depths of God's judgments on earth, trying to ascertain God's will regarding the sack of Rome or any other calamity, but should focus on the Judgment to come.

At the Judgment, the New Jerusalem will come down from heaven "as a bride adorned for her husband," and "the kingdoms of the world" will become "the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." This is the hope of the Church in a dying age, and this should be the focus of each Christian, as it was for Augustine himself, struggling with his own desire for sin, the barbarian of his Old Man attacking from the inside.

Augustine's advice, ultimately, is to place all of our hope in God. That seems, on the surface, a ridiculously simple admonition. Men, especially Americans, want to know what they must *do*. How do we stem the tide of the barbarian invasions that threaten our cities? How should we react to the bombing of our Romes—New York City and Washington, D.C.? Does the state of politics, culture, foreign affairs, or the economy tell us something about the future of the world? Perhaps, but nothing really new. America, like all other empires, will fall. In the grand scheme of things, our lives are but a "drop in a bucket," "blades of grass," "a chasing after the wind."

> "By your mercy, Lord, from the time when my mother fed me at the breast my infant heart had been suckled dutifully on his name, the name of your Son, my Saviour. Deep inside my heart, his name remained, and nothing could entirely captivate me, however learned, . . . however true it might be, unless his name were in it."

Is Augustine telling us that our lives on earth, our human connections, the place into which God has planted us do not matter? No: They are the accidents through which God reveals Himself. Augustine, who longed for a life of solitude, was thrust, by Providence, into a life of worldly affairs. As bishop, he had to serve as arbiter of civil disputes every day. He was diverted by controversies throughout his career—by those who claimed that the Catholic Church was impure and by those who taught that the one Mediator was a mere moral example. Yet, throughout his life—thanks, in part to philosophy, and, in greater part, to his mother's witness to the Gospel—Augustine centered himself on things eternal and found his ultimate citizenship—his real hometown—in Heaven, the City of God. We may—and should—attempt to answer all of those questions about our dying civilization; but our hopes, if not placed firmly in the Gospel and in the City of God, will be dashed as surely as those of the Romans who wept while the Eternal City burned.

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A Psalm Makes Us Love the Future

Augustine's Doxology and the Christendom to Come

by Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem.

"As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be; world without end. Amen."

H. Ward Sterett

"God granted that the life of this holy man should be a long one, for the benefit and happiness of holy Church, and he lived seventy-six years, nearly forty of them as priest or bishop. In the course of them he often told us that the reception of baptism did not absolve Christians, and especially priests, however estimable, from the duty of doing fitting and adequate penance before departing from this life. He acted on this himself in his last and fatal illness. For he ordered those Psalms of David which are specially penitential to be copied out and, when he was very weak, used to lie in bed facing the wall where the sheets of paper were put up, gazing at them and reading them, and copiously and continuously weeping as he read."

Thus Possidius of Calama describes the last days of his friend Augustine of Hippo. In that August of A.D. 430, Hippo Regius was practically the last Roman municipality of any size in Africa still being defended against the Vandals, Goths, and Alans. For 14 months, the city was under siege, deprived of its coast, and in the year after Augustine died, it was abandoned and burned to the ground by those "subverters of Romanity," as Possidius calls them.

The completion of the life's work of Saint Augustine was one of the high points of Latin Christian culture. In terms of intellectual and moral influence, it was arguably *the* high point, for every serious Western Christian thinker since has claimed him for himself: Boethius, Isidore, Anselm, Aquinas, Bellarmine, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Descartes, Leibniz, Berkeley, Wesley, and Newman. There is simply no Christianity in the Western world, whether Catholic or Protestant, that is not Augustinian. So much is this the case that some of our Eastern Orthodox critics give negative confirmation of the fact, finding in Augustine's thought the source of all of our errors, a sort of noetic "original sin" that explains everything from the *filioque*, the papacy, and the Crusades to easy annulments, rationalist illuminism, and historicism, and this in spite of the fifth ecumenical council's ranking him with Saints Chrysostom and Basil.

As devoted as we Western Christians are to our *spiritus rector*, and as often as we invoke his authority for speculation or spirituality, we rarely pose ourselves the question "What did Augustine do all day?" or "How did he spend his time?" Of no one more than the saints can it be said that they died as they lived. Augustine was, in his own estimation, first and foremost a monastic. The greatest single occupation of his day was David's Psalter. His (or perhaps his friend Alypius') *Ordo Monasterii* gives the division for day and night, in summer and winter, for the round of psalmody in the chapel of the bishop's house by the *basilica pacis*.

Of course, in his devotion to the Psalms, Augustine was no innovator. The Apostolic Church had taken over the hymnal of Temple and synagogue, beginning from the night of the Last Supper and first Eucharist, when Christ intoned Psalm 118 (or 117, as Augustine would have numbered it) with his disciples. Early synods assumed that the memorization of the Psalter was a necessary quality for any priest or bishop. Even so, Augustine was an unparalleled enthusiast for the popular singing of the Psalms, and he provided his people and everyone since with a complete commentary on all 150 of them. The singing of the Psalms, in fact, motivated his conversion. In the ninth book of his *Confessions* we read:

What cries I sent up to You, my God as I read the Psalms

Fr. Hugh is prior of St. Michael's Abbey in Trabuco Canyon. He prays the psalms every day with his brethren.

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of David . . . Yes, I was on fire to sing them, were it possible, in all the world against the pride of mankind, though in fact they were already being sung in all the world . . . How abundantly did I weep to hear those hymns and canticles of yours, touched to the quick by the sweet song of your Church . . . my tears overflowed and I was happy in them.

So great was the influence of Augustine's preaching and use of the Psalter on the clergy and people of Western Christendom that, at a distance of 700 years in the 12th-century *Life of St. Norbert*, we find a girl, possessed by a devil who makes her recite in Latin, German, and French Solomon's Song of Songs, even though "when she was well, she *only* knew the Psalter." At a distance of more than a millennium, we find Elizabeth Tudor, according to Protestant accounts, devoutly perusing her Psalter when she is informed of her accession in November 1558. Across the globe 40 years later, hanging from their crosses, neophyte Japanese martyrs sing Vulgate Psalms 30 and 112, taught them in catechism by the Jesuits whom the same *Gloriana* had so zealously persecuted.

As the religious revolution continued, from Scotland to Savoy, from Amsterdam to Transylvania, the most resolutely reformed of Christians, who had jettisoned practically every other ancient liturgical observance, zealously maintained that most monastic of rituals, the choral singing of the Psalms. In the meantime, the Spanish and Portuguese empires compensated the loss to Catholicity of much of Europe by dotting the Americas and the Philippines with collegiate churches and friaries in which indigenous choirs sang the Latin Psalter, a practice which still endures each day in the *Metropolitana* of Mexico City. Clergy and laywomen, canons and missionaries, Protestant and Roman Christians of different races in all parts of the earth had a common form whereby they fulfilled the highest duty of any society, the worship of the Creator: the Psalms of David, which, in the fourth century, were already being "sung in all the world."

What concrete common possession kept Western Europe and its empires still, in some sense, a united Christendom, even after the religious disasters of the 16th century? There was no agreement as to civil or ecclesiastical polity, there were conflicting economies, and even, to the eternal shame of Lutherans and Frenchmen, different approaches to the Turkish menace. Yet there was a universal norm accepted by all: God is to be worshiped by the recitation of the Psalms. Christendom could still praise her origin and end, using the very words by which, as Augustine pointed out, "God praised Himself, so as to enable us to praise Him rightly." The Latin West, no longer united by an orthodoxy of a doctrinal and moral sort, as was the East, still maintained a kind of orthodoxy insofar as it held to an ideal of the "right praise," which the word implies and the Psalms guarantee.

Even in 1999, at the ceremonies marking the end of British rule in Hong Kong, the retiring colonial authorities sang the familiar Anglican hymn for Evensong that had expressed the sounder—and poignantly prophetic—sentiments of a still expanding Christendom of a century before, a vision of a Christian world united by the uninterrupted singing of the Psalms. This vision was brought to England 15 centuries before by that other Psalm-singing Augustine, sent by that most Augustinian of popes, St. Gregory the Great.

The day thou gavest, Lord is ended,
The darkness falls at thy behest;
To thee our morning hymns ascended,
Thy praise shall sanctify our rest.

The sun that bids us rest is waking
Our brethren 'neath the western sky,
And hour by hour fresh lips are making
Thy wondrous doings heard on high.

So be it, Lord, thy throne shall never,
Like earth's proud empires, pass away:
Thy kingdom stands, and grows forever,
Till all thy creatures own thy sway.

The *eversores Romaniae* of which Possidius wrote in the fifth century have finally succeeded in our day in doing what the Arian Vandals and Goths would never have even wished to do: There is scarcely a Christian who could sing a whole psalm by heart, nor do our churches ring with the *laus perennis* beyond the occasional responsory or anthem. Augustine bequeathed the works and witness without which Western Christendom would not have existed, as he prayed the Psalms in a doomed city. Could we not as families and churches return to the praying of the Psalms, hoping that, by following his example, we may ensure the future flourishing of our own culture, of which he is the father, if anyone is? There are the Great or the Little Offices for the Catholic, the Scottish or Geneva or Prayer Book Psalter for the Protestant, and—let us not forget them—the *Kathismata* for the Orthodox. Here we could find a common ground, not based on ecumenical theorizing or joint paraliturgies, but on faithfulness in fulfilling a common duty of right worship. Even the pagan Stoic teaches us *religio vera est fundatio status.* If every Christian child possessed a memory sanctified by whole texts of the Psalms, this alone could preserve our kind, while our land is being destroyed by the uncomprehending.

The remaining citizens of Christendom have every reason to fear at present, but they will only be able to preserve their patrimony if they have sure hopes for the future. Augustine contrasts the dire warnings against the world found in the Gospels with the confident desiring of the Psalter. In his commentary on Psalm 147, he tells us that, "Although the psalms might speak to us and sing of that life to come, the Gospels will frighten us about the present life. A psalm makes us love the future . . . " It was this loving hope that accompanied Augustine at the end and that, in a certain sense, is the source of our culture and of its survival. Now let us hear (and perhaps sing!) the psalm which Augustine calls in his commentary one of the *amatoria cantica* of the future, lasting city of which our Christendom is the passing sign:

Praise is due to thee, O God, in Zion;
and to thee shall vows be performed . . .
When our transgressions prevail over us,
thou dost forgive them . . .
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house . . .
By dread deeds thou dost answer us with deliverance,
O God of our salvation,
who art the hope of all the ends of the earth . . .

c

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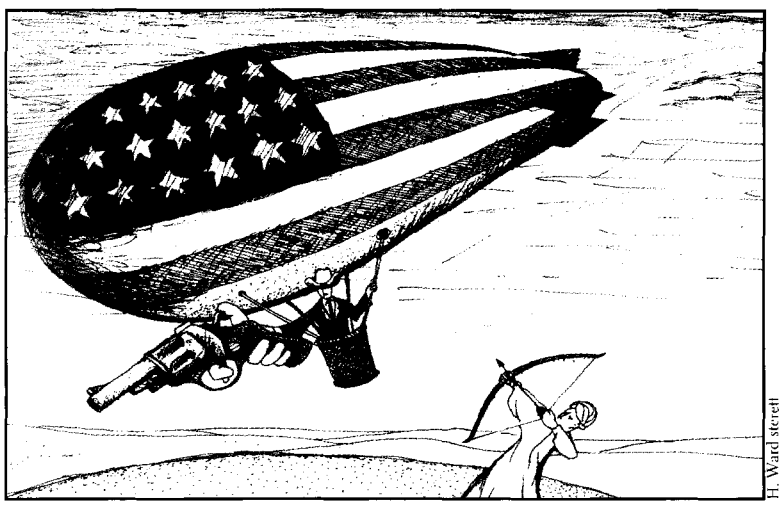
The Hollow Empire

Relatively Not So Great

by Srdja Trifkovic



America's present position is paradoxical. On the one hand, her unparalleled power and wealth are reflected in the astoundingly imperialist "National Security Strategy" unveiled last October, which asserts a right to stop any country "from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing or equaling the power of the United States." That America is a global empire may be celebrated, regretted, or viewed with alarm, but it cannot be denied.

On the other hand, America is in deep moral decay. Her decadent elites are unwilling to confront a demographic deluge that can only end in population replacement. Her survival as a nation with distinct origins, traditions, and institutions is no longer uncertain but unlikely.

The paradox was aptly illustrated by the panic that gripped Washington, D.C., following the recent sniper attacks. The city trembled—the same proud city in which decisions are made that determine the destinies of millions of Iraqis, North Koreans, and Serbs. And September 11, far from proving the strength of the imperial edifice, displayed its underlying fragility. Another major terrorist outrage—and those in the know say that it is not a question of "if" but of "when"—would likely cause mass panic and an economic nosedive.

Americans simply lack the moral fiber necessary to maintain an empire. They would be well advised to consider the lessons of two previous attempts at imperial expansion at the tail ends of decaying civilizations.

Justinian heroically attempted to put the Roman Empire back together, but the recovery was short-lived. It drained the empire's resources so thoroughly that, only decades after his death, Muslim hordes swept almost unopposed through the Holy Land, Egypt, and the rest of North Africa, conquered the Fertile Crescent, and twice besieged the imperial capital itself. While the fruits of the recovery lingered on for centuries in the splendor of Ravenna and Venice, we know, in hindsight, that the Eastern empire's manpower and treasure would have been better deployed in protecting its borders and in consolidating its body politic.

Justinian's inability to foresee the nature of long-term threats to his empire may justify his actions. The blunder committed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the last quarter of the 19th century, when it embarked on a policy of imperial expansion in the Balkans, was less pardonable: Many contemporaries understood the danger and warned that the experiment would prove fatal to the Habsburgs.

Austrian expansion, marked by the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina agreed upon at the Congress of Berlin (1878) and by the province's subsequent annexation (1908), sought to address the problem of nationalist discontent by bringing external sources of agitation into Vienna's orbit. This policy only aggravated the problem: In an age of patriotic awakening among its many small nations, the old and feeble supranational empire lacked the will and the resources to absorb Bosnia and to keep Serbia in check.

Expansion also led the Dual Monarchy to seek control of the corridor between Bosnia and the remainder of European Turkey, the *Sanjak* of Novi Pazar, which further complicated the "Eastern Question." Its attempts to subjugate Serbia by means of a tariff war (1906-1911) proved ineffective and, indeed, enhanced Belgrade's links to Paris and St. Petersburg. Meanwhile, the Habsburg Empire was growing increasingly frantic about the problem of Serbian nationalism, while simultaneously fanning its flames: For Franz Ferdinand to visit Sarajevo on St. Vitus Day in 1914 was an act of folly comparable to the Prince of Wales parading through Dublin on St. Patrick's

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Srdja Trifkovic is Chronicles' *foreign-affairs editor and the author, most recently, of* The Sword of the Prophet: Islam: History, Theology, Impact on the World *(Regina Orthodox Press).*

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Day. There is a sense in which World War I was caused by Vienna's Serbophobia, and some segments of the German-speaking world have blamed the Serbs ever since for the first of their two great disasters in the 20th century.

World War I destroyed the Habsburgs and the rest of Europe with them, but the gross carnage was possible only because millions of young men whose countries were not attacked were willing to die for the imperial ideal. Britain's lads volunteered for king and country, even though the kaiser had no intention of mounting an invasion across the Straits of Dover, and the mother country could count on the loyalty of millions of Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, and South Africans whose graves dot the landscape of Picardy. Italy's war aims included expansion to the eastern shore of the Adriatic, the land "where only the stones are Italian," in the name of Venice's long-dead glory. This ambition was to cost Italy half a million lives and lead her into another disaster a generation later. The extent of Germany's appetites became obvious at Brest-Litovsk, and the same lust for the Slavic-inhabited *Lebensraum* led her into the terminal blunder known as "Barbarossa" a quarter of a century later.

The cost of empire is the inevitable ruin of the nation that embraces the project. Such a warning will not impress the ideologues of "benevolent global hegemony," but I am comforted by the thought that America's decline may commence sooner than we think, and that it will not last as long as the decline of Rome, Byzantium, or the Ottoman caliphate. The grounds for such cautious optimism are to be found in certain features of our postmodern empire that make it different from previous imperial endeavors.

First of all, the American Empire is feminized. All rising and strong empires have celebrated manly virtues. It was sweet and decorous to march east with Alexander, to vanquish Gaul with Caesar, to ride with the Old Guard at Austerlitz, and to administer India with Clive. On the other hand, as we have seen with the Hellenistic heirs to Greece and late Rome, when virility is gone, sensuality, magic, mystical religion, and astrology set in. The American Empire's doctrine of "humanitarian intervention," the urge to mediate its dominance in terms of "saving children" or bringing "human rights" to the "oppressed" is a form of effeminate mystical religion.

Our empire keeps trumpeting itself. It is morbidly self-conscious rather than heroically spontaneous. A strong, viable empire does not need to justify itself to its citizens or its subjects: The former have a natural understanding of the project and readily identify with it; the latter simply do not matter—they obey. In the United States, by contrast, we are bombarded by self-justifying theories based on ideological assumptions that are alien to America. True empire-builders have no need of "ideology"—"a system of interested deceit"—because they have a vibrant culture. The proponents of postmodern empire constantly complain that the citizenry needs to be "engaged," "educated," and "informed," because their notions remain uninternalized by most Americans. For that reason, the emerging empire is unable to count on the self-sacrificial enthusiasm of its rank-and-file.

In the heyday of the Raj, a district commissioner would dress for dinner even though he ate alone, the temperature was over a hundred degrees, and he was the only European within a hundred miles. Today's Americans are more akin to Epicurus, a product of Hellenistic decadence, who preached maximizing pleasure and minimizing suffering: "The end of all our actions is to be free from pain and fear, and, once we have attained all this . . . the living creature has no need to go in search of something that is lacking." The *Zeitgeist* is reflected in the obstinate refusal of young Americans to enlist even in the jingoistic aftermath of September 11 and in the attempt of the recruiters to induce them by an array of strictly material incentives.

Continuation of the imperial experiment will further strain America's weakened moral fiber and erode her liberties. We need a prudent reallocation of resources combined with a realistic assessment of our current moral capabilities and a pragmatic evaluation of the real threats to our civilization: Third World immigration and Islam. That is the path of physical survival, cultural revival, and spiritual renewal. It may not seem likely, but miracles do happen. c

Skip Church

Alfred Nicol

It's worth the trip to stay in bed and see
The educated faces on TV
Recite opinions ready-made this week,
Which may be thought, but only so to speak.

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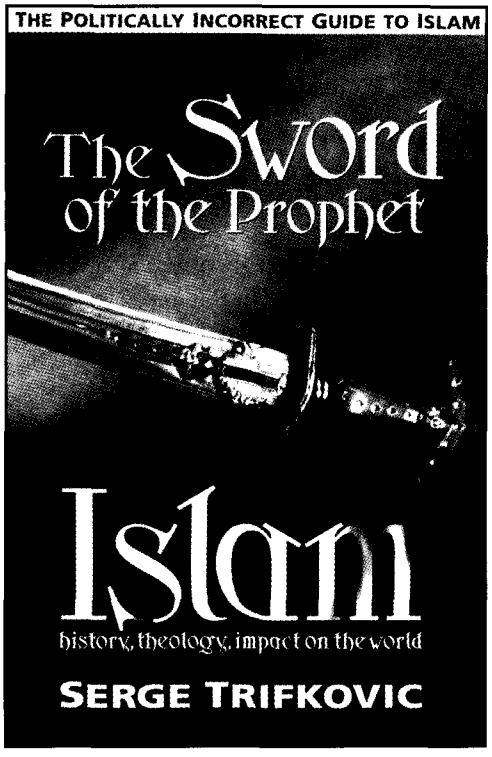
—Thomas Fleming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A Week of Mondays

by Paul Gottfried

"There is always a certain meanness in the argument of conservatism, joined with a certain superiority in its fact."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Revolt From the Heartland: The Struggle for an Authentic Conservatism
by Joseph Scotchie
New Brunswick: Transaction; 135 pp., $29.95

◆

H. Ward Sterett

What helps set this study apart is its still largely *verboten* subject. Joseph Scotchie devotes his attention to that part of the American right that Lee Edwards, Jonathan M. Schoenwald, and William Rusher ignore in their discussions of "conservatism" or, at best, bring in to exemplify "extremist" aberrations. This book is not Scotchie's first investigation into the topic. In 1999, Transaction Publishers brought out *The Paleoconservatives: New Voices of the Old Right*, which combines commentaries on second-generation Old Right theorists (including several of *Chronicles*' editors) with selections from their writings. While Scotchie recognizes that the paleos have been marginalized through what Thomas Fleming and Samuel Francis describe as the "liberal and neoconservative left," he also notes what these thinkers have brought to the American right. Literary ability, classical education, mordant wit, and a reflective critique of the left are qualities Scotchie identifies with the new Old Right, which emerged in the early 80's and found its permanent home in *Chronicles*. Thus, he maintains in his final paragraph:

> Paleoconservatism amounts to a thorough education in Western and American history: where the nation came from, what the nation was intended to become, what it has disintegrated into, and how Americans might find their way back.

Scotchie's crisply told narrative should be familiar to *Chronicles* readers. He quotes generously from Fleming, Francis, and other *Chronicles* editors. While the periodization of his monograph was drawn, with due acknowledgement, from my revised edition of *The Conservative Movement*, this new study has an original perspective, having been conceived more than a decade later and realized by someone of a younger generation.

According to Scotchie, these men stand for an "authentic" American right, while the neoconservatives, who swallowed up the conservative movement, are leftists who have succeeded in draining the right of any real conservative content. The now-marginalized revolt from the American heartland did have its chance in the early 90's, when Pat Buchanan turned to the paleos during his presidential campaign and when some of their issues—such as immigration, decentralization, and opposition to American imperialism—became matters of national interest. Scotchie discusses the successive turning points that became a series of disappointments, all of them attributable to a single overarching cause: The liberal and neoconservative left would not allow Fleming, Francis, Clyde Wilson, M.E. Bradford, or any of the other authentically conservative voices into the left's political conversation. As Scotchie puts it: "The Old Right faces a long road ahead. Every day is Monday."

A marked difference between this work and *The Paleoconservatives* is Scotchie's current view that paleoconservatives are not an updated version of an older right, whether Southern Agrarian, Taft Republican, or post-World War II *National Review*-ism. Paleos, that is, are not *just* the Old Right (although Scotchie persists in applying this term to them) but a movement forged out of the conservative wars of the 1980's, which became a frequent journalistic topic by the early 90's. Scotch-

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ie tells us that the paleos can claim far more of a "conservative heritage" than those who have marginalized them can: Throughout his book, he seems to be searching for starting points and actuating causes for a distinctively paleoconservative movement. Moving from Richard M. Weaver's critique of modernity and Bradford's upholding of Patrick Henry as the archetypal American republican, through Fleming's early career in South Carolina, the seminars of Russell Kirk, and the rediscovery of the interwar American isolationists, down to the conservative wars of the 80's and the first presidential campaign of Buchanan, Scotchie brings to mind Thucydides, who also grappled with the questions of when and how historical processes begin.

In my view, paleoconservatism starts with those conservative intellectuals who would not go along with the neocon takeover in the early 80's and who continued to resist that process. One way or another, those who resisted paid a heavy professional and social price that has not yet been fully assessed. It might be fitting to compare these men to those conveniently forgotten members of the French right who opposed the Vichy government and viewed Hitler's occupation of France as an abomination. Not surprisingly, most of the French put up with that humiliation. Like our own "conservatives," the French right had morally corrupt and/or senile leaders who largely called for *"rabibochage"* (making up with the enemy for the good of France). But the conservative nationalists who resisted Hitler refused to reinvent themselves. They understood that the immediate political enemy was an expansive Germany, then allied with the Soviets, and they set this concern above the opportunity for using the invader to increase their personal power, or to settle scores with personal opponents.

The paleos' independent spirit has made it hard to mold them into a unified movement. Neocons have prevailed not only because they resemble the establishment left but because they picked up the sheep from among the old conservatives. And it is useful for a movement with changing party lines to have compliant adherents. Conversely, it is hard for those who spend their lives in moral revolt to mobilize effectively.

As a native of Asheville, North Carolina, and the author of underappreciated monographs on Richard Weaver and Thomas Wolfe, Scotchie has a marked predilection for the Southern Agrarians. The foundations of the paleos whose story he tells are linked repeatedly to a Southern Agrarian tradition, while the seminal paleo figures on whom Scotchie focuses—such as Bradford, Fleming, and Wilson—are viewed as part of a lineage of thought and sensibility going back to the contributors to *I'll Take My Stand*. Scotchie recounts the literary efforts of Southern conservatives in 1981 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of that anthology. His emphasis points to the Southern paleos' self-conscious sense of place and the regionally situated political and cultural tradition that they defend. In a controversial symposium, "The State of Conservatism" (published in the Spring 1986 issue of *Modern Age* and which Scotchie surprisingly does not mention), Wilson described the neoconservatives as "interlopers" crossing into his "camp," though they remained unreconstructed leftists. Prescinding from the usual neoconservative invectives against unreconstructed Southerners as holocaust-prone antisemites, Wilson's statements reveal a highly particularistic understanding of a properly defined conservatism that permeates *Why the South Will Survive* (his attempt to update *I'll Take My Stand*). Those who were presuming to steal the conservative label, and who were (and still are) profiting from that theft, were (and are) intensely hostile to the region and culture Wilson associated with his conservative outlook.

The South deeply offends those "interlopers" who were not simply "crossing" technical political boundaries but were making it impossible for Southern conservatives to be taken seriously as anything but bigots. Without being simplistic, it is fair to say that how one relates to the South and its tragic cause has become the acid test of who is, or is not, a conservative. Although it is possible to find an isolated descendant of a New England or Midwestern Brahmin who supports the Union's invasion of the South, sympathy at least for the courage and gallantry of the Old South and its aristocratic manners seems to me a *sine qua non* of the truly conservative mind. Moreover, it is now clear that, even beyond the slavery question, what makes the figure of Lincoln so appealing to the left, and so reprehensible to the paleos and the old *National Review* crowd, is the mission that has remained identified with his career and death: the use of consolidated government to achieve federally mandated equality, of which American citizens never seem to have enough, and in enough ways. The "Lincoln myth" has fueled political-managerial interventions in civil society that no true conservative would be able to stomach.

As for the Southern Agrarians whom Scotchie exalts, overlaps can be found between what they fought and what the paleos are now opposing. In the 30's, the Agrarians saw themselves as both anti-Marxist and anticonsumerist. They correctly perceived a strong resemblance between Marxism and a form of capitalism that destroys the possibility of a decentralized economy focused on households and communities. Although the socioeconomic ideal they upheld has, in all probability, been buried by economic "progress," the critical observations they made regarding a plastic materialist hypermodernity remain valid nonetheless, applying to the noisily proclaimed values of the *Wall Street Journal* and to the editorials of Francis Fukuyama and Virginia Postrel (celebrating our victories over the past and our advances toward a global society based on markets, homogeneous cultures, "human rights," *etc.*).

Allow me, finally, to elaborate on a statement from one of my own books that Scotchie paraphrases. He refers to my remark that, in the end, what matters for people is the economy. The statement is true, with two significant qualifications. Materialism is a worldview, as Thomas Molnar once observed to me, not merely a quest for material acquisitions. Moreover, beyond materialist values, voters throughout the Western world believe in—or expect their elites to believe in—the politics of guilt (that is, in the steady reaching out to sexual degenerates and alien Third World populations who are widely depicted as victims of Western Christian civilization). But these two disagreeable fixations sometimes come into conflict—for example, over the immigration question or over Islamic attitudes toward homosexuals—and it is possible for the heartland right to exploit such a conflict whenever it occurs. In the absence of a traditional belief system incarnated by traditional communities, such opportunistic politics may be the only kind that the right can presently pursue with some assurance of success. With these minor clarifications aside, I repeat the obvious: Joseph Scotchie has written knowledgeably on an intellectually sparkling but woefully neglected political and literary movement. c

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A Bad Man's View of the Law

by Stephen B. Presser

Law Without Values: The Life, Work, and Legacy of Justice Holmes
by Albert W. Alschuler
Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press; 325 pp., $30.00

◆

Law professors rarely write books. When they write at all, they typically produce incomprehensible and heavily footnoted articles (usually unread) for obscure law reviews. It is even rarer to find a law professor who can write with flair about something of more than ephemeral interest. And it is rarest of all to find a law professor who can address a topic important to the readers of *Chronicles* and reach a conclusion that makes good sense. That has happened, however, in the case of University of Chicago Law Professor Albert Alschuler's pungent little jurisprudential biography of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.—one of the best works on Holmes, legal theory, and legal education to appear in the last 30 years.

With the possible exception of Chief Justice John Marshall, no figure in American legal history is more venerated in law schools than Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841-1935). No one gives a major address to a law-school audience without taking care to quote Holmes at least once, while among the milder encomiums distinguished law professors have lavished on him are that he was "the great oracle of American legal thought," "America's most distinguished citizen," "the only great American legal thinker," and "the most illustrious figure in the history of American law." As Alschuler demonstrates with almost savage grace, Holmes' is one of the great undeserved reputations of our era. Alschuler argues that none of the man's ideas was original, much of his writing was undistinguished and impenetrable (especially his book, *The Common Law* (1881), a tome virtually unread today but still widely regarded as the greatest American law book ever written). Moreover, he was a nasty, crabby, mean, and selfish man.

So why the unparalleled obeisance to Holmes? Alschuler hints at some possible explanations: Holmes was a patrician's patrician, a Boston Brahmin, a member of the Porcellian at Harvard as an undergraduate and a law professor there before serving on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court for 30 years and the U.S. Supreme Court for another 20. Holmes brilliantly developed a circle of admirers and sycophants, many of whom went on to become influential in government and the academy; he knew everybody, corresponded with several, and possibly made love to at least one British aristocrat; and he cultivated one of the great mustaches of his time. (Alschuler fails to mention that he was a dead ringer for Michelangelo's rendering of God as painted on the Sistine Chapel.)

None of this really explains, though, how someone of pedestrian legal skills could end up regarded as our only authentic jurisprudential oracle. Alschuler's answer is that Holmes wrote "five great paragraphs" in *The Common Law* and that, in doing so, he limned a philosophy of law perfectly in tune with the desires of those who took over the teaching of law, in the postwar period especially. In his "great paragraphs," he explains that "The life of the law has not been logic: It has been experience," and that

> The substance of the law pretty nearly corresponds at any given time, so far as it goes, with what is then understood to be convenient; but its form and machinery, and the degree to which it is able to work out desired results, depend very much upon its past.

Most importantly, he holds that

> in substance the growth of the law is legislative. . . . The very considerations which judges most rarely mention, and always with an apology, are the secret root from which the law draws all the juices of life. I mean, of course, considerations of what is expedient for the community concerned.

Adopted by a group calling themselves "Legal Realists" and waving the banner of Holmes, these ideas permeated law schools in the 20th century and eventually gave license to a slew of state and federal judges fundamentally to remake American private and public law in accordance with their particular notions of what was best for Americans. The loss of the American people's ability democratically to make law for themselves through their constitutions and the acts of their elected representatives is bad enough, but, for Alschuler, there is a greater dimension to this tragedy: The revolution in the nature of judgment and legal education that Holmes furthered resulted in a body of law (and, probably, a society) bereft of what had given it greatness. This is the problem of "Law Without Values," flagged in the title of Alschuler's book. While American law in the 18th and most of the 19th century was lodged firmly in the tradition of Plato, Aquinas, Blackstone, Washington, and others who believed that there could be no law without morality and no morality without religion, the followers of Holmes in the 20th century embraced their master's notion that this assumption was nonsense.

For all of Holmes' considerable charm, Alschuler reminds us, he had a terrible emptiness, if not an evil, within him. He was selfish, vain, and ambitious, had few really close friends, and seemed to take a perverse delight in the physical tragedies of others. He actually advocated exterminating unfit infants, brought snobbery to a fine art, and thought, like Thrasymachus, that justice and morals were simply what the strong chose to impose on the weak. Alschuler's thesis is that this deeply flawed man gave us a deeply flawed jurisprudence. He believes that a country in which law without values takes hold—a country where the preferences of those wielding power on the bench and off are the only tests of what is good law—is in deep trouble.

Alschuler concludes his book with an eloquent plea for a return to law *with* values and, in particular, a return to Socrates' notion that a standard of justice exists, against which human laws can be measured and found wanting. Holmes famously (and, perhaps, characteristically) claimed that we should look at the law as a "bad man" would and that all that law students should be concerned with is a prediction of "what the courts will do in fact." Instead, Alschuler proposes that, if

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we must define law (which he concedes may be asking too much), our definition should be "those societal settlements that a good person should regard as obligatory," thus making a clear statement in favor of morality as a basis for law. This is a very courageous thing to say in the legal academy today, especially where Alschuler teaches. (Chicago, after all, is the Rome of Law and Economics, a current legal specialty devoted to a bloodless Holmesian examination of the law.)

Law Without Values is not without flaws. Alschuler's (or his publisher's) politically correct preference for using the feminine gender pronoun is irritating. (My favorite example: "A president's duty is sometimes to disobey legislation that she considers unconstitutional . . .") His closing discussion of what he considers to be the promising new academic phenomenon of searching for truth through "a new epistemology based on coherency of ideas" is not as convincing as the implicit plea for a return to simple Judeo-Christian notions that Alschuler has made in some of his other works. In his discussion of the decline of American culture, which he correctly attributes in part to the ascendance of Holmesian notions in law, Alschuler fingers Comedy Central's *South Park* as an example of the "violent and bitter" worst, though it is, in fact, an inspiredly hilarious and brilliant (though admittedly vulgar) cartoon that satirizes many of the things Alschuler is against. Finally, whenever Alschuler wishes to provide an example of unjust law, he resorts to such traditional law-school whipping boys as slavery, racism, and Nazism, even though it might have been, perhaps, more convincing to advert to the havoc that latter-day legal nihilists like Holmes have wreaked on Africa, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, or the U.S. Supreme Court in the late 20th century. These, however, are quibbles, advanced as much to validate the praise offered here as to criticize the book.

Law Without Values is a slim volume (fewer than 200 pages of text followed by 100 pages of copious notes), yet Professor Alschuler has written a big and important book: a splendid, laudable, and necessary jurisprudential tract for our time.

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Ashley Wilkes for Real

by J.O. Tate

Carolina Cavalier: The Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew
by Clyde Wilson
Rockford, Illinois: Chronicles Press; 303 pp., $24.95

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For those who know it, the Huguenot-derived name "Pettigrew" immediately evokes the associated word, "Gettysburg." Brig. Gen. Johnston Pettigrew was prominent on the first day of that battle, as the commander of Pettigrew's Brigade, and on the third day, as the commander of Heth's Division, which included his brigade. Pickett's Charge might as well have been called Pettigrew's Charge, or, as Clyde Wilson suggests, "Longstreet's Assault." But as it is, there is still no Gettysburg without Pettigrew. Not long after that Fourth of July that coincided with the fall of Vicksburg and Pet-

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tigrew's own birthday, the Army of Northern Virginia was without Pettigrew. He was killed in the chaos of a rear-guard action at Falling Waters, and his loss was much lamented, for it seems that everyone knew his quality.

Pettigrew's Civil War career was not consonant with his ability, and that was almost certainly a matter of luck. He was active in organizing the defense of Charleston before the Fort Sumter crisis but played no great role in the thing itself. He was wounded and captured at Seven Pines or Fair Oaks Station, the beginning of the Seven Days. Exchanged, he served under D.H. Hill in the abortive action at New Bern and at the affair at Blount's Creek. Clyde Wilson has not written for us the story of a Confederate brigadier, however, but an account of a mind and sensibility that could not be completely expressed in the Civil War.

Johnston Pettigrew grew up as the scion of a distinguished and landed family in North Carolina. He excelled at school and at the university at Chapel Hill. He was soon surveying stars for Matthew Fontaine Maury at the National Observatory. But what was Pettigrew to do as his lifetime calling? Though Pettigrew eventually did much legal work in Charleston, Wilson has shown how his energy and sensitivity were focused by his travels in Europe. Unusually mature for his age and exceptionally responsive to the various environments, Pettigrew's two trips to Europe were the high points of his life. His mind and imagination were excited to a remarkable degree by his encounters with others, and, as always with him, there was a gap between his emotional and intellectual responses. Pettigrew was later to declare that he wished as his lifework to write a history of the Moors in Spain. He did not live to do it, but his serious intent speaks volumes about his imagination, his historical sense, and his ability to think past the provinciality that is often the lot even of intelligent people.

Pettigrew did not write of medieval Spain, but he did write a book, in the spring of 1861, about Spain, his travels there, and his reflections. He had the ability to see past the surface into the depths of culture and character. Though a man of his age and place, he could and did respond to Spain as a 19th-century romantic with a pronounced streak of intellect. He loved the Spanish dignity and passion, the hierarchical sense, the manners of the *don* and the *doña*. And he was quite explicit about the political affinities he sensed between the American and European Souths. As he wrote on entering Spain for the second time,

> Adieu to a civilization which reduces men to machines, which sacrifices half that is stalwart and individual in humanity to the false glitter of centralization, and to the luxurious enjoyments of a manufacturing, money age!

On his first trip to Europe, Pettigrew had learned that he could not enjoy the values of the English and the northern Germans. He instinctively was pulled to the south, where he became as besotted by Italy as many another has been. But then there was Spain, for which he felt a high degree of knowing identification. For a man of his background and cultural assumptions, his ease in relating to another world was remarkable, and so was his mastery of languages. Pettigrew was not unique in that regard, however, for the story of American attraction to the repudiated continent is old and varied. Even so, his degree of self-consciousness, his sense of himself as a Southerner, and his sense of himself and his heritage in historical perspective are notable achievements by a man of many talents. Pettigrew's sensibility is oddly modern in its development. He seems to have arrived at something like Henry Adams' position 40 years before that South-despising ironist did. And therefore, Wilson's life of Pettigrew is much more than a military tale. Rather, it is a valuable contribution to American intellectual history.

As Professor Wilson has said of Pettigrew's work at the very beginning of the Civil War,

> Still, strangely, the zeal with which Pettigrew immersed himself in his pressing tasks did not at all preclude his customary ironic detachment, the hallmark of a good mind able to rise above its immediate circumstances.

Just so. The fact that this particular cavalier, lawyer, scholar, and scientist wore gray and was glad to do so says much about his own age, but also something about ours. Clyde Wilson's elegant performance is addressed not only to the shade of Johnston Pettigrew and the world that died not long after he did but to the consequence of that collapse and the continuing cultural calamity. *Carolina Cavalier* is an antidote for, or a rebuttal to, the contemporary propaganda that suffuses the airwaves and clots the presses. It is the best historical work I have seen in a long time and an invaluable statement about the Civil War, its meaning and character, its causes and issues, and its abiding significance. I missed this book upon the occasion of its first publication but can now only feel that I was lucky in that mischance. I have had the serendipitous pleasure of a delayed first reading, and, in that glow, I think I will be far from alone.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

Frontier Taliban

by William Grigg

Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Mountain Meadows Massacre
by Will Bagley
Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press; 544 pp., $39.95

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To understand the impact of the event known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre, it is useful to focus on the date of that atrocity: September 11, 1857. On that Friday morning, Mormon militiamen lured the members of a California-bound wagon train into an ambush. Collaborating with Paiute Indian allies, the Mormons slaughtered 120 people. Many victims were shot at point-blank range; some of the children were clubbed to death.

In his 1877 memoir, massacre participant John D. Lee described a meeting of Mormon leaders in Cedar City before the attack. "Brethren, we have been sent here to perform a duty," declared a person described by Lee only as "some one in authority."

> The orders of those in authority are that all the emigrants *must* die. Our leaders speak with inspired tongues, and their orders come from the God of Heaven. We have no right to question what they have commanded us to do; it is our duty to obey.

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Historian Will Bagley wrote *The Blood of the Prophets* in order "to examine how decent men, believing they were doing God's work, committed a horrific atrocity"—what was, until the Oklahoma City bombing of April 1995, the bloodiest act of terrorism perpetrated on American soil.

Mormon historians have habitually "laid the blame on the victims and Indians, and that tradition is alive and well today," notes Bagley. Mormon folklore describes the California-bound wagon train, under the leadership of seasoned frontiersman Alexander Fancher, as a horde of violent bigots, including men responsible for killing Mormons in Missouri. Some accounts claim that the Arkansans provoked the Indians by poisoning streams and giving them a poisoned beef. In a six-volume history published around the turn of the 20th century, Mormon leader B.H. Roberts retailed much of that folklore, even as he grudgingly allowed that Mormons "have been naturally slow to admit all the facts that history may insist upon as inevitable."

Many of those unpalatable facts were presented in Juanita Brooks' 1950 study, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, which the Mormon author (a granddaughter of a coconspirator in the massacre) wrote and published in the teeth of intimidation by Mormon authorities. Brooks' volume "repeated many of the slanderous tales" about the massacre victims, notes Bagley, and accepted John D. Lee's argument that the Paiutes led the attack, with the Mormons acting as little more than frightened accomplices. Both of these conclusions are demolished in Bagley's new study. Still, Bagley commends Brooks for her brave work in documenting that "[Brigham] Young's cover-up of the crime made him an accessory after the fact, and that he stage managed the sacrifice of John D. Lee" as a scapegoat. Today, church-aligned Mormon historians acknowledge the validity of Brooks' work, even if they ignore its implications regarding Young's crime in covering up the massacre.

In an address last May, Richard Turley, an historian employed by the Mormon Church, laid the blame at the feet of "militia and church leaders of Iron County." He also obliquely acknowledged the cover-up: "Due to an environment of mistrust, some documents of importance were sequestered by institutions or individuals and kept from researchers." Throughout Mormondom, informed observers understood that Turley's officially sanctioned admissions were meant as a preemptive strike against Bagley's book. Subsequent to its August publication, the book was assailed in a review published by the church-owned *Deseret News*, which accused Bagley of having a "sledgehammer agenda" and assailed the University of Oklahoma Press for "publishing what is really an anti-Mormon tract." That review was a splendid illustration of what Bagley calls "the myth of persecuted innocence," which, for nearly a century and a half, was invoked to justify the massacre and efforts to cover it up.

Turley's description of the Mormon cover-up was a work of Clintonesque dissimulation. As an independent researcher, Bagley could be blunt in describing efforts to purge the archives:

> Missing or destroyed sources include John D. Lee's 1857 diary, the minutes of the Cedar City church meeting whose participants voted to kill the emigrants, correspondence between local militia commanders and Brigham Young, and pages ripped from 1857 journals.

Bagley, however, was able to find a key piece of evidence in a diary kept by Dimick Huntington, Brigham Young's brother-in-law and Indian interpreter. The account describes a September 1 parley between Young and a group of Indian chiefs. During that meeting, Young "gave" the Indians the cattle belonging to the Arkansas wagon train, which was, at that point, passing through southern Utah. Young "understood it was likely that innocent women and children would die in the Indian attacks he tacitly authorized," contends Bagley. "The Paiute chiefs left Salt Lake City the day after their meeting with Brigham Young, and the first attack on the Fancher party ensued less than a week later."

In Bagley's telling, the Mountain Meadows Massacre was an outgrowth of Young's campaign of asymmetrical warfare against the U.S. government. At the time of the massacre, Young was both Utah territorial governor and the territory's superintendent of Indian affairs. From their arrival in the Rocky Mountains in 1847, the Mormons made clear their intention to establish a theocratic kingdom in what they called the territory of "Deseret"—a vast area encompassing modern Utah as well as parts of California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Idaho, and Oregon. As the prophetic successor to Mormon founder Joseph Smith, Young ruled an American caliphate. He was seen as God's mouthpiece, with jurisdiction over matters both temporal and spiritual.

Even as Mormon leaders petitioned Washington to admit Deseret into the Union, they uttered apocalyptic predictions that America's "gentile" (non-Mormon) government would soon fall as divine punishment for shedding the "blood of the prophets"—Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, who were killed by a mob in June 1844. Mormons who had undergone the quasi-Masonic initiation administered in the Nauvoo, Illinois, temple were bound by oath to seek vengeance for the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum, as well as those of Mormons who had died in earlier intercommunal violence in Missouri. In May 1857, President Buchanan, acting on reports that the Mormons were in rebellion against federal authority, dispatched an army to install a new governor.

As the conflict raged between Washington and Deseret, Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt was serving a mission in Arkansas, where he baptized a woman named Eleanor McLean. Eventually, Eleanor was "sealed" to Pratt as a "plural wife." Her cuckolded husband responded by tracking down Pratt and murdering him. News of Pratt's death reached Utah at about the same time the Mormons learned that the U.S. Army was on its way. The Arkansas wagon train arrived in Utah at the convergence of these events. "The party from Arkansas was probably doomed from the moment the Mormons learned of the death of Parley Pratt and the approach of the American army," writes Bagley.

> The emigrants fell victim to Brigham Young's decision to stage a violent incident that would demonstrate his power to control the Indians of the Great Basin and to stop travel on the most important overland roads.

In early September 1857, the Fancher train reached a park called Mountain Meadows, about 400 miles from its destination. When the Indian attack ensued, the wagons formed a defensive circle, with sharpshooters repelling the initial sortie. Mormon leaders from Cedar City, determined to annihilate the emigrants, devised a ruse to lure the Fancher party

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out of its fortified position: Militiamen would approach the train under a flag of truce, urge the men to disarm, and offer to escort them to safety.

The Fancher party was separated into three groups, with the men marching in single file, each of them bracketed by an armed Mormon. At a designated signal, the procession drew to a halt, and the Mormons opened fire on the disarmed men. At the same time, Paiutes swarmed the women, older children, and wounded. The Mormons plundered the train of its considerable wealth; eventually, they sluiced some of it into the church's tithing office. The children who survived the attack were temporarily adopted into Mormon homes.

In 1859, amid mounting public outrage over the atrocity, Congress paid to transport the child survivors back to Arkansas. Before Washington could pursue a proper investigation of the massacre, however, its attention was diverted by the crisis that led to the War Between the States. Young and his minions did their best to cover up the Mormon Church's official responsibility for the crime, finally scapegoating John D. Lee for the entire affair. Lee was tried, convicted, and executed at Mountain Meadows in 1877.

To this day, the Mormon leadership refuses to acknowledge the Mormon Church's official role in the atrocity. "I would place the blame on the local people," Mormon President Gordon B. Hinckley told the *Salt Lake Tribune* in 2000. Each of those "local people," however, was bound by oaths and covenants to make Brigham Young's "will my pleasure," as Lee lamented just before his execution. Each was steeped in doctrines that demanded blood vengeance for the death of God's holy prophets. And none of them was ever cut off from the church in whose name he carried out the bloody deed. While Lee was excommunicated following his conviction, he was posthumously reinstated to membership in 1961—a tacit acknowledgement by Brigham Young's successors that Lee's actions were indeed in line with the prophet's will.

William Grigg is a journalist living in Appleton, Wisconsin.

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A Man for Our Century

by Tobias Lanz

Wilhelm Roepke: Swiss Localist, Global Economist
by John Zmirak
Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books; 241 pp., $24.95

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Wilhelm Roepke (1899-1966) is one of the most original, yet least recognized, economic thinkers of the 20th century. One of the reasons for his relative obscurity is that he does not fit well into the prevailing capitalist/socialist dichotomy. Roepke borrows from both capitalism and socialism, yet he goes beyond defining economics in abstract terms and brings it down to the human level. Thus Roepke, along with E.F. Schumacher, is the chief architect of what can broadly be termed the humane, or social, market economy. This Third Way defends basic market principles while grounding economic practices in the moral framework established by family, community, and religion. For Roepke, this formulation most closely approximates the free-market ideal, as the market flourishes best when it is protected by tradition and local prejudice against the predations of the state and big business.

John Zmirak's book chronicles the intellectual development of Roepke, who started out as an Enlightenment liberal who believed in social progress and ended up a critic of the damage wrought by the excesses of modernization. Roepke spent most of his career in Geneva, where he fled to escape Nazi persecution in his native Germany in the 1930's. This long exile profoundly influenced Roepke's thinking. He admired the Swiss for their fierce political independence, which was founded upon a tradition of political decentralization and a vigorous agrarian economy. Moreover, this tiny nation had enough political and economic strength to support (and control) the many international corporations headquartered there. In this cultural environment, Roepke began to recognize an alternative to the totalizing political economies of capitalism and socialism.

To Roepke, mass democracy and totalitarianism, characterized alike by the centralization of power and the loss of freedom, were one and the same thing. Against these ideologies, he took up the cause of bourgeois localism. As one who stood outside the ideological *status quo*, he labored to develop theories that could defend the importance of political autonomy, economic decentralization, and social solidarity. But he wanted theories that could also yield results. Roepke saw in all of the ideologies of his time, whether of the right or of the left, a reliance on abstract ideals at the expense of principles derived from experience. Thus, he focused on the most enduring and tangible human institutions: the intermediary bodies of families, civic groups, and churches, which he considered the only structures that could effectively restrain the centripetal forces of modern economic and political power. Roepke believed that the failure to sustain these entities and their social influence paved the way for atomistic individualism, on the one hand, and centralized political and economic power, on the other.

As his thought matured, Roepke moved closer to the views of Robert Nisbet and other postwar cultural conservatives. Ever more critical of Enlightenment liberalism, he began to embrace an older European tradition based on Christian respect for the person, the Greek love of reason, and the Germanic tradition of decentralized power. Zmirak refers to what he calls Roepke's belief in the "politics of prudence"—one of the great legacies of Western civilization, since prudence keeps the human appetite in check and thus maintains the subtle balance between social order and individual freedom. By contrast, modern ideologies undermine the older prudential perspective and replace it with an aggressive ideology of final solutions and the perfectibility of man. Amid this welter of exaggeration and its forceful imposition, the more fragile and cultivated tradition of modesty and measure breaks down, and the proletarianization of society becomes inevitable.

Roepke held modern feminism, which strives to create the independent and autonomous woman, in contempt. To him, the removal of women from the household represented a tremendous social upheaval, since such traditional female activities as education, crafts, sewing, cooking, and gardening help maintain economic autonomy and social solidarity. Once women become independent,

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the household disintegrates, and its members become vulnerable to the predations of economic and political bureaucracies. Already in the 1950's, Roepke foresaw household fragmentation and the subsequent rise of suburbanization—a separation from community and nature that only exacerbates feelings of alienation among men, driving them into the hands of the state and big business. He also foresaw the processes of economic and political centralization at work at the global level. Roepke was highly critical of the growing power of the EEC, GATT, and most U.N. organizations, which he regarded as manifestations of a false internationalism that could only further undermine any chance for political and economic autonomy at the local level.

Roepke was a reverent man from a long Lutheran lineage who stressed in his writings the social importance of organized religion. He was also influenced by Catholic social teaching and its emphasis on the principle of subsidiarity, as well as by the Anglo-American political tradition of constitutional government and the rule of law. On this score, Roepke differed from many of his libertarian friends in perceiving the need for a strong government with clearly delineated powers. (The state has to be effective in dealing with such collective matters as transportation, defense, pollution control, *etc.*) He also distanced himself from the libertarians' neutral positions on individual morality and social responsibility. Although Roepke helped found the libertarian Mont Pelerin Society after the war, many disagreements over the limits of individual freedom and the role of government finally led to his resignation. The break so upset him that it may, in fact, have contributed to his early death.

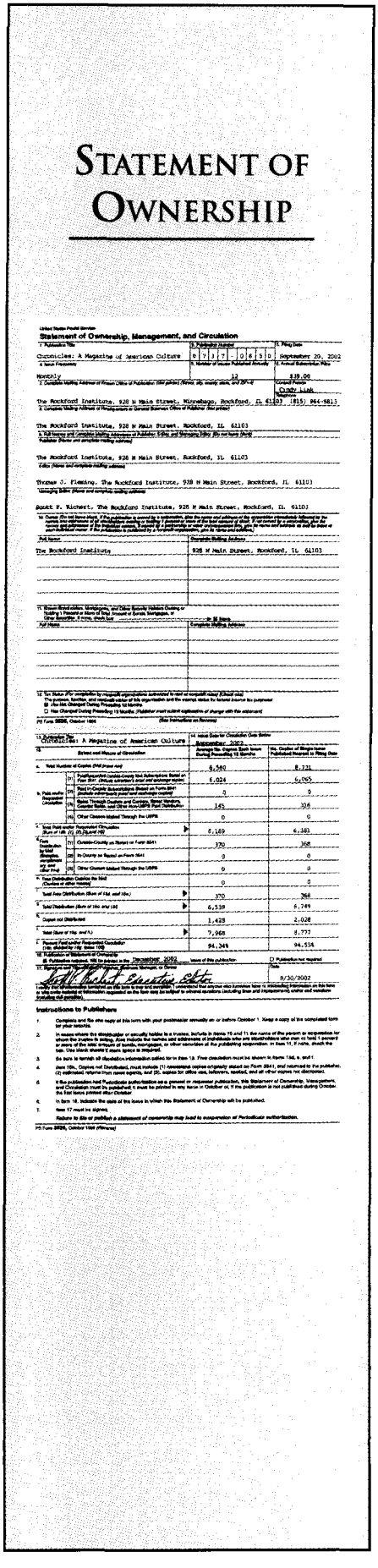
Although Roepke spent much of his life toiling in intellectual isolation, his ideas finally gained currency after World War II by influencing key German government officials who developed economic policies according to his prescriptions. Roepke also took an active role in drafting a monetary-reform policy that helped guide Germany to future prosperity. Wilhelm Roepke will most likely be remembered, however, for his ability to steer clear of the ideological propaganda that so permeated the 20th century and to remain faithful to the noblest ideals of Western civilization. As Zmirak notes in his Introduction, Roepke was really a man for the 21st century, since it is in this century that the ideals of political autonomy, economic decentralization, and social solidarity may finally have a chance at taking root again in a landscape wracked by the conflicts and injustices inflicted by modern ideologies.

An important concept that Zmirak unfortunately does not discuss is Roepke's idea of "wage inflation." Wage inflation may be explained as the disparity in wages that occurs between industrial production and agrarian and artisanal production. Because of its greater productivity, industry creates higher profits and wages. The surplus, however, is distributed unevenly between industrial workers and investors. Roepke believed that this disparity in wealth is the root cause of a number of modern maladies, including explosive urbanization, mass immigration, consumerism, and widespread environmental degradation. In rural areas, the differential underlies the movement toward massive agribusiness, as producers try to achieve economies of scale to match returns compatible with those of industry. For most economists, the rise of industry and the decline of an agrarian economy are signs of progress and, in any event, inevitable; for Roepke, they were another symptom of the excesses of modernization. Rural life is essential to civilization. (Roepke was an avid gardener.) And although industrial production is highly remunerative, it does not follow that all of humanity must be sucked into its vortex. (On this score, Roepke echoes many of the sentiments of the British Distributists and Southern Agrarians.) Critical of industrialism's centralizing tendencies rather than of the phenomenon itself, he understood that the concentration of wealth and people in cities paves the way for the centralization of political and economic power and the ultimate proletarianization of society.

Overcoming the negative social consequences of wage inflation requires not only political will and foresight but a firm reliance on, and respect for, traditional intermediary institutions that can militate against the seductive material forces that have been unleashed since the Industrial Revolution.

Roepke's intellectual heirs must now discover these political means to protect nations, communities, and families from the savage onslaught of materialism.

Tobias Lanz teaches politics at the University of South Carolina.



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by Samuel Francis

World War IV

Be not deluded, just because the United States goes to war with Iraq, that our leaders will not also extend to the entire Middle East the *jihad* on which President Bush and his court of neoconservative gurus and Zionist *Weltpolitikers* have embarked us. Well before any public announcement of whether we would actually make war on Iraq, the gaggle surrounding the President was plotting how they might escalate the war far beyond the "liberation" of Baghdad. That the most extreme of the cabal wanted an expanded war for their own ulterior reasons was not open to doubt—almost all of those crowing most loudly for a full-scale war in the Middle East were well-known partisans of Israel and her interests. What was of greater interest was the cabal's use of the ideological chocolate sauce of "global democracy" to envelope their case for the most naked military aggression and warmongering.

In recent years, the world has heard little of Michael Ledeen, the gentleman who gave the United States the Iran-Contra scandal of the 1980's when he helped arrange the secret deal by which Israel provided weapons to guerrillas fighting the Nicaraguan Sandinistas in return for a U.S. "tilt" toward Iran in its war with Iraq. By last summer, however, Mr. Ledeen was back in print in a long op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* (September 4), in which he sounded one of the first and bluntest declarations of what he and his colleagues in the Washington field office of the Mossad expected of their colony.

"By all indications," Mr. Ledeen lamented, the discussion of the impending war against Iraq "will be about using our irresistible military might against a single country in order to bring down its leader." The real goal, however, should be the far loftier one of continental emancipation. "We should instead be talking about using all our political, moral and military genius to support a vast democratic revolution to liberate all the peoples of the Middle East from tyranny." Needless to say, when Mr. Ledeen speaks of "liberating all the peoples of the Middle East," he is not thinking of the Palestinians, any more than when he refers to "tyranny," he is thinking of Israel.

The war "is not just a war against Iraq" but rather

> against terrorist organizations and against the regimes that foster, support, arm, train, indoctrinate and command the terrorist legions who are clamoring for our destruction. There are four such regimes: in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

And all this time, you thought we were going to wage a "war against terrorism" because of the September 11 attacks, that our enemy was Al Qaeda and its leaders and the Taliban regime that harbored them and refused to give them up. That, indeed, was the ostensible reason offered by administration spokesmen, and that is why the administration spent so much time and energy trying to concoct some "linkage," however remote, between the Baghdad regime and Al Qaeda, if not the actual terrorist attacks of September 11. To date, all such "linkages" have proved far too opaque to incite any but the most belligerent of country-western patriots to thump their chests and strum their guitars for war against Iraq. Now, we learn that the real enemy is not Al Qaeda at all or even the despicable Saddam Hussein but the major Arabic and Muslim states of the Middle East, none of which has done much to antagonize, threaten, or harm the United States in the last decade.

Not to be outdone, the September issue of *Commentary* sported an article that outstrips even Mr. Ledeen's zest for transcontinental conquest. The article, by the magazine's retired editor, Norman Podhoretz, was titled "In Praise of the Bush Doctrine" and was ostensibly a good Republican cloth coat that boomed the genius of the incumbent chief executive. In fact, although Mr. Podhoretz touted the speeches written for the President as what he called "the heights of sublimity," the article was really an elaboration of the "Bush Doctrine" of "pre-emptive war," whereby the United States asserts the right to attack just about any other nation it wishes, regardless of the actual level of threat or harm the targeted country has offered us. Mr. Podhoretz, however, concluded his manifesto by calling for "pre-emption" well beyond anything Mr. Bush had thus far contemplated.

Mr. Podhoretz pondered the awesome problem of whether

> the United States has the will to fight World War IV—the war against militant Islam—to a successful conclusion, and [whether] we then have the stomach to *impose* [italics his] a new political culture on the defeated parties. This is what we did directly and unapologetically in Germany and Japan after winning World War II; it is what we have indirectly striven with some success to help achieve in the former Communist countries since winning World War III; and it is George W. Bush's ultimate aim in World War IV.

How Mr. Podhoretz knows that this is the President's "ultimate aim" and why he, rather than some official spokesman, is the proper person to announce it to the public are not explained, but the foes with whom "we" have to deal in the coming global Armageddon exceed even those listed by the valiant Mr. Ledeen. "The regimes that richly deserve to be overthrown and replaced," Mr. Podhoretz lectures,

> are not confined to the three singled-out members of the axis of evil [Iraq, Iran, and North Korea]. At a minimum, the axis should extend to Syria and Lebanon and Libya, as well as "friends" of America like the Saudi royal family and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, along with the Palestinian Authority, whether headed by Arafat or one of his henchmen.

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Set aside the geopolitical exhortations offered by other members of the Zionist-neoconservative cabal and consider merely the war demanded by Mr. Ledeen and Mr. Podhoretz. The enemies' list in their crusade includes not only Iraq, as well as Al Qaeda and Afghanistan, but Iran, Syria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority (not to mention North Korea and, we may assume, eventually China). The mind reels at the scale of the world conflagration in which these armchair warriors are so eager to embroil America, yet at no time has either of them offered a single reason why the United States should regard any of these states as an enemy. Mr. Ledeen assures his readers that not all of the countries on his little hit list are Arabic (*e.g.*, Iran); what all the targets do have in common, however, is that they are, in some sense, enemies of Israel, not of the United States. Lebanon and Egypt, the most improbable of the enemies listed by Mr. Podhoretz, seem to harbor such groups as the Syrian-backed Hezbollah and pro-Palestinian factions that Israel would like to see exterminated. Saudi Arabia, of course, is a major ally of the United States in the region, and even if her religious and political culture make her both an anachronism and a source of funds for anti-Israeli terrorists, she does not represent any serious threat to America or her interests. Indeed, we have every reason to ensure that the Saudi government endures and prospers, not to antagonize or overthrow it.

The Bush administration should not only ignore the advice of such characters as Mr. Ledeen and Mr. Podhoretz but consider placing them under surveillance as possible agents of a foreign power; the main purpose of the global war they are fomenting is simply to make the United States the perpetual enemy of the entire Arab/Muslim world, so that we will have no other "ally" in the region that reaches from Morocco to Indonesia but the small and increasingly desperate state of Israel. Embarking on outright wars with virtually every major Arab country in the region would not only expose this country to dangers it has no reason to court but would lock us into perpetual and bottomless support for Israel and the expansionist designs of the Sharon government. There would be no other state in the region with which we could balance our relationship with Israel, except for the inconsequential microstates of the Persian Gulf. That perpetual animosity between the United States and the Arab world is precisely what Mr. Ledeen, Mr. Podhoretz, and their fellow intriguers want, not the protection of Israel from any immediate danger and certainly not the safety and interests of the United States.

The ulterior purposes of neoconservative foreign policy ought to be transparent, but what is also noticeable in the rationalizing formulas that the neocon sages develop for their policies is their reliance on the rhetoric of global democratism that has been gushing abundantly from Beltway think tanks and publishers for the last two decades. The "vast democratic revolution" that we are going to construct in the Middle East is our real goal there, Mr. Ledeen assures us, and Mr. Podhoretz frankly urges the "imposing" of "a new political culture" on the vanquished. As I argued in last month's column, what this really means is not so much "democracy" in any classic sense as the soft managerial regimes that have emerged in the Western world over the last century. The elites that run the West today would quickly meld with those that would emerge in the Middle East under the whip of a "MacArthur regency." Yet even this kind of political and cultural engineering might prove difficult in the Arab/Muslim world, regardless of how many bayonets we are willing to sit upon there. As former secretary of the Navy James Webb pointed out in the *Washington Post* on the same day that Mr. Ledeen's piece appeared in the *Journal*, war with Iraq alone would probably force us to occupy that country for the next 30 years. That, of course, is almost exactly what the neocons want.

Despite the fraudulence of the "democracy" that the neocons are demanding we "impose" on the Middle East, the global democratism to which they pay lip service does possess a life of its own. It is a direct descendant of the military "export of democracy" undertaken by the Jacobins of the French Revolution, an export that embroiled Europe in war, revolution, and social and political chaos for a generation before ending in the simple military dictatorship and naked imperialism of Napoleon Bonaparte. It is an ideology thoroughly appropriate for aggression and imperialism because it has long since convinced itself that it has a monopoly on virtue, that anyone or any institution that deviates from its model is devoid of virtue, and that its monopoly gives its high priests and holy warriors the absolute right to exterminate any deviation without mercy or restraint, to trample out the vintages all across the earth. Mr. Ledeen plainly says of the four states that he wishes to conquer that "all are tyrannies." Some are, no doubt, but at least one (Saudi Arabia) is merely the kind of tribal monarchy that has flourished among nomadic peoples since before Muhammad's time, while others are merely authoritarian regimes that allow the non-nations they rule to be held together at all. None is a "democracy" in any sense, classic or other, and that is clearly what Mr. Ledeen really means when he says "all are tyrannies." The Jacobin mind is simply incapable of comprehending that "tyranny" is not the same as the absence of the kind of "democracy" it wants to "impose."

Mr. Ledeen and Mr. Podhoretz may merely be exploiting the quaint and harmless-sounding noises of "democracy" to justify and recruit support for a generation of chaos that would make that of the Jacobins seem placid, but there are some who seem really to believe such rhetoric and for whom the "export of democracy" really is important. In a clearly ghostwritten column in the *Washington Times* last September, the almost-forgotten Jack Kemp gasped out the clichés and sonorities behind which Mr. Podhoretz's World War IV is lurking. "The globalization of peace, democracy and free markets has been the hallmark of America's foreign policy," Mr. Kemp chirped happily.

> It is what Abraham Lincoln summed up as the predicate of his political philosophy when he said the Declaration of Independence is what "gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but hope to the world, for all future time." The 21st century must not be an American century alone, but rather a century of liberal democracy and freedom for all.

It is hard to tell who is more dangerous, Mr. Ledeen and Mr. Podhoretz, with their cynical invocations of democratic banalities to justify war, conquest, and the interests of a foreign country, or such children as Mr. Kemp, who are unable to see beyond the banalities to the realities of power that lie beneath. After all, the capacity of those banalities to induce men to initiate wars and conquests makes such noises at least as dangerous as the men who seek to exploit them for their own purposes. ·c·

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by Scott P. Richert

I'm Not a Number

I stepped through the metal detector and walked down the long hallway to the old entrance to the Winnebago County Courthouse, a monument to less security-conscious days. In Room 502, I joined about 200 other citizens, waiting to do our civic duty. Signing in, I received my badge: no name, just a number—Juror 11593. *I take my card and I stand in line . . .*

Looking around, a few things struck me: first, the relative lack of blacks and Hispanics; second, the extremely low number of identifiably professional people—doctors, lawyers, *etc.* In Illinois, jurors are chosen from both the voter and driver's license rolls, and yet the prospective jurors were overwhelmingly working- and middle-class whites.

While I was mulling over the possibility of a class-action lawsuit alleging reverse discrimination in jury selection (*People Who Don't Care* v. *Winnebago County*), my name and 35 others were called, and we walked down one flight of stairs to Judge Ronald Pirello's courtroom.

Judge Pirello gave us a brief description of the case: Wendy Schneider was suing Dr. Harry Darland, alleging trespass, false imprisonment, intentional and negligent imposition of emotional distress, and battery, resulting from Dr. Darland's role in having her involuntarily committed to a psychiatric ward eight years before.

As jury selection started, I thought my position at *Chronicles* would amount to a get-out-of-jail-free card. In fact, the first question Pirello asked me was, "You look familiar. Have we met before?" I explained that I had been in his courtroom several times, covering cases, including the eminent-domain proceedings against Tom and Jan Ditzler. When Pirello announced that *Chronicles* was "right of center" and asked whether that might bias me toward the doctor, I saw the light at the end of the tunnel. As the plaintiff's attorney, Dennis Schumacher, told Pirello, "Judge, we except—," I was ready to grab my bag and go, until the full sentence sank in: "Judge, we accept this slate of jurors."

Thus began six days in the courthouse, considering a case that was largely without merit. At age 26, Mrs. Schneider (then unmarried) had been admitted to the hospital for a possible aspirin overdose, which friends, relatives, and her doctors thought was a suicide attempt. And so, a week and a half later, when Mrs. Schneider, after a night out drinking with some friends, called another friend and indicated that she now knew how "to do it right," her father became understandably concerned.

What followed was, in fact, a technical violation of Illinois law. In Illinois, only a police officer, state's attorney, or the courts have the authority to order an involuntary commitment. But Mrs. Schneider's apparent threat to kill herself occurred in the early hours of a Sunday morning, and a police officer, dispatched to her house around 3:00 A.M. to conduct a "welfare check," chose not to convey her to a hospital, because friends at the house promised to keep an eye on her. With the police option seemingly exhausted and the state's attorney's office and the courts closed, Mrs. Schneider's father turned to Dr. Darland, who had delivered Mrs. Schneider and was the only physician she had ever had.

What happened next is a matter of dispute; the only thing that is certain is that each side was subtly skewing its testimony to make its case stronger. Dr. Darland and Mrs. Schneider's father went to her house, where Dr. Darland took her—admittedly, against her will—outside, loaded her in the car, and brought her to the hospital. She spent eight days in the psych ward before the courts forced her discharge because of the technical violation of the law.

If the plaintiff's case had been strong, Dr. Darland's insurance company would have settled years earlier. The plaintiff's attorney, a former prosecutor for Ogle County, did the best he could, but long before the testimony had ended, it was clear to everyone in the courtroom that the plaintiff had no hope of winning significant damages—clear, that is, to everyone but Mrs. Schneider and a representative of the doctor's insurance company.

Testimony ended on Friday; we were told to return at 10:30 on Tuesday morning for closing arguments and deliberation. When the appointed hour came, Judge Pirello emerged from his courtroom and went over to a conference room occupied by the plaintiff and her lawyer. *They've settled the case,* I thought to myself, and minutes later, after we were ushered into the jury room, Pirello came in to thank us and revealed what he could: The representative from the insurance company had become concerned about the possibility of a large award, and so he had offered the plaintiff "considerably more than $50,000" (the amount she was asking for) to settle the case. Pirello asked us how we would have voted, and the response was unanimous: We would have awarded damages of no more than one dollar.

For years, insurance companies have blamed skyrocketing premiums on, on the one hand, juries who grant outrageous awards, and, on the other, working- and middle-class people who take advantage of their insurance to run off to the doctor whenever they have a sniffle. But here was a clear-cut case; even the plaintiff's attorney later admitted that he had bet Mrs. Schneider a steak dinner that the settlement would be far better than any damages she would receive from the jury. And as far back as April 1998, concurring in an appellate court opinion reinstating Mrs. Schneider's case on technical grounds, one justice had written, "Based upon the present record, it remains to be seen if the plaintiff can recover more than nominal damages."

As I walked away from the courtroom, all I could hear were the words of Bob Seger, playing over and over again in my mind. To the insurance company, Juror 11593 was "just another statistic on a sheet," as was the settlement whose costs will be passed on to the 12 flesh-and-blood men and women who would have made the right decision, if only they had been given the chance. c

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Letter From the Upper Midwest

by Sean Scallon

Blizzard

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Storms and other phenomena of nature have their own distinct sounds. Those who have survived a tornado often say that it sounded "like a train." A volley of cannon fire accompanies every thunderstorm. The gale-force winds of a hurricane howl at nearly 200 miles per hour, as the rain strikes objects with the velocity of a bullet. The only natural disaster that doesn't have a sound is a drought, for it is a silent killer, a Kafkaesque occurrence in which a nice, sunny day with nary a cloud in the sky brings disaster.

A blizzard falls somewhere between hurricane and drought. Blizzard winds can gust to 80 miles per hour or more, and you can't help but hear the shrieks, wails, and moans of the air rattling through the window panes, haunting you like a ghost. When the winds die down and it's just the snow falling, however, you can pull the shades down and cozy up by the fire next to your favorite hound or loved one and pretend not to notice—until it's time to shovel the driveway.

There weren't that many whitewash blizzards in the Upper Midwest last winter; in some places, there were none at all. Most of the nastiest storms struck the southern parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin, falling into Iowa and Northern Illinois. This troubles folks here. This may seem strange to outsiders, who wonder why anyone would derive pleasure from six-foot snowdrifts, icicles as tall as trees, temperatures low enough to grind bedrock, jackknifed trucks and overturned cars on the highways, piles of snow collapsing the roofs of neighborhood schools, and civilization coming to a screeching halt while a heavenly salt shaker with its cap unscrewed buries us all below. But it's not really pleasure so much as assurance.

Sure, the snowmobilers, the skiers, the polar bears in human form all love the snow and make millions from other polar bears. Yet, for most of us Midwesterners, a blizzard reaffirms who we are and why we choose to stay here. A blizzard can hit the South or the West or the Mid-Atlantic, as one sometimes does, and those who live there will curse God and Mother Nature for such a calamity and pray they may never see such a thing again. But for Midwesterners, blizzards and snowstorms are part of the natural order of things. What would our landscapes and homes look like if they were not wrapped in a shroud of white for six months out of the year? Brown, boring, and ugly. We can celebrate 60-degree temperatures in January if we know they are just a temporary escape from reality. Without the frozen tundra, we would lose our identity. If International Falls, Minnesota, were not known as the "Nation's Icebox," what would it be known as? To this day, I cannot fathom why some immigrants from tropical Third World countries (Mexico, Somalia, Laos) would want to live in this part of the country, to trade the warmth and sunshine that they are used to for the icy reality of land meant for the Nordics—the hearty souls from Northern Europe or from the great mountain ranges of the Alps, the Balkans, the Urals, the Carpathians, and the Pyrenées who understand how to tame the fiercest of winters.

A weather forecast up here nowadays can be a political platform as much as it is news. If the winter is a warm one (and, over the past decade, there have been several), then it is the perfect time to trot out the old global-warming theory and to campaign for signing the Kyoto Treaty. (Of course, since most weather records go back only to 1895 or a little earlier, can we really say this winter was warmer than any other? How does this winter compare to the winter of 1816? Or 1622? No one really knows, except for the environmentalists who never let such questions shake their dogmatic certainty.)

I tend to judge a winter by how many of the sporting events I cover get cancelled and rescheduled because of snowstorms, icy roads, foggy nights, or subzero temperatures. "It always snows around tournament time" is an old saying that, I hope, is unique to the Badger State. It certainly came true during the second week of March 2002, when a nasty blizzard parked itself over the Upper Midwest while I was staying in a hotel in Rice Lake, covering a basketball sectional. First came the freezing rain, coating the roads, trees, powerlines, and signs in ice as thick as maple syrup. Then came the sleet, laying down a layer of frozen pellets for an extra-crunchy sound when you walked. Finally came the snow, in small flakes, but so many as to resemble a swarm of insects. This white blindness was bright enough to create shadows in my hotel room. Of course, no blizzard is complete without wind to make it more interesting—in this case, gusts up to 70 miles per hour howling from the northwest, swirling the snow around as if Rice Lake were inside a mixer.

During part of the time that I spent trapped in Rice Lake, I could keep the shades drawn and ignore what was going outside except for the sound of the wind rattling the windows. But alas, my hotel had no room service, and so I had to brave the elements for provisions. I spent time outside in the storm scraping the ice and sleet off of my car, fixing my windshield wipers, and kicking away the snowdrifts piling up beside my wheels, while trying unsuccessfully to shield my face from the icy wind. And, as I scraped, I thought.

I thought about Valley Forge, how its harsh winter was the crucible in which our republic was born. I thought about the "Icy March" made by the brave soldiers of the Volunteer Army in March 1919, those Russian Whites who survived cold, hunger, starvation, disease, and the fierce blizzards of southern Russia, only to be chased by the Red Guards. Those who survived that campaign were given a medal that had a crown of thorns with a sword running through it. And I thought about our own soldiers in 2002, fighting and dying upon peaks and cliffs of snow-capped mountains in Afghanistan. Many of these soldiers were without sleeping bags or were equipped with winter gear left over from the 1950's. I hope that, in those units, there were men from the Upper Midwest who could lead by example.

If history and culture show that winter can build the character of a man, then certainly the loss of so many people from our region to the Sunbelt over the past three decades is troubling. Some left to look for work. Others, the cowards and the shirkers, went away because they could not take the seasons anymore, leaving us

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behind, supposedly to freeze and die in empty factories and abandoned fields. (That was the popular characterization of the "Rustbelt" back in the 1970's and 80's.) Still others, the snowbirds, leave just for six months, heading to their condos in Arizona, Florida, Texas, and New Mexico. They claim that their old bones can't take clearing their walks anymore, even with a snowblower. Once upon a time, a neighbor might have looked after them to make sure they weren't buried alive, but in a self-centered society such as ours, why take any chances when you can have sun year-round?

A good chunk of my hometown of Ellsworth, Wisconsin, migrates when November comes around and doesn't return until April. At the newspaper I work for, we have to make many address changes on subscriptions to make sure they reach the right resorts. With the state of the mail, it is a hit-or-miss proposition (often a miss), and we don't hear the end of it. During a village board meeting, the village president joked that we should hold our December, January, and February meetings in Florida, Texas, and Arizona, since that's where much of our constituency is. In fact, one board member was already down there, a snowbird himself, away from his duties as a village trustee for five months out of the year. I voted against him in the last election and was pleased he didn't win.

There's no question that America has held a prejudice against winter for the past 30 years, but that may be changing. Besides the rise of winter tourism, we have the recent success of the U.S. Winter Olympic team, which won more medals than ever before, and the romanticization of the Green Bay Packers and the "frozen tundra" they play on. Recently, I saw a photo of a Duluth man shoveling his driveway after yet another winter storm dumped a foot of snow on the city. He commented that he had moved back to Duluth from New Mexico to experience the certainty of winter along Superior's shores once again.

This past winter, I was more annoyed than ever by the juvenile chit-chat of our local anchors and weathermen whenever a spate of Chinook winds brought us a warm spell. I get the impression that they wish the whole region, if not the whole country, had weather as boring as that in Seattle or California. They seem oblivious of the region in which they live and of what its climate should be. Nasty e-mails from snow-lovers have to serve as reminders to the talking heads: "Upper Midwest winters—love 'em or leave 'em!"

Sean Scallon is a reporter who lives in East Ellsworth, Wisconsin.

Letter From Cuba

by Doug Bandow

A Dying Dictatorship

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Avenida 21, number 3014, is a nondescript house in an Havana suburb. The paint is peeling; the walls are plain; the rooms are sparse. Inside lives Elizardo Sanchez Santa Cruz, a Cuban dissident working to free the Cuban people. The task is not easy. Despite the collapse of communism elsewhere, here "political repression has been increasing," says Sanchez. People are routinely detained; independent journalists and human-rights activists are beaten and jailed. Tracey Eaton, the *Dallas Morning News* correspondent in Havana, observes that you "couldn't get anyone from our world to say that human rights are flourishing." Vicki Huddleston, until recently head of the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba, agrees: "This government is very good at intimidation."

That intimidation has not prevented Cubans from risking their lives, freedom, and property to fight for human rights. Sanchez is known as the dean of human-rights activists and heads the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation. Of medium stature and with gray, receding hair, the 59-year-old Sanchez doesn't look like someone who would strike fear in the Cuban government. But, as Sanchez notes, while the regime took power in 1959 in a genuinely popular revolution, "the base of support of the government has been shrinking" ever since.

That would make any dictatorship nervous. Sanchez observes wryly that he has spent "only eight-and-a-half years in prison"; colleagues have been jailed for as many as 30 years. His crimes include criticizing Castro in private conversation, speaking of jails loaded with political prisoners, and attacking the regime's purge of popular military figures. The latter generated a charge of "disseminating false news against international peace." The Castro regime's policy is simple, Sanchez explains: It violates "all political, economic, and civil rights." Because of the vagaries of the regime, however, "repression in Cuba has oscillated, sometimes increasing, sometimes decreasing." The level of repression depends, in large part, on the degree to which people express discontent. More popular opposition yields more repression—as when students stormed the Mexican embassy in spring 2002 in hopes of gaining exit visas. The physical force employed against them by the government was "pretty startling," says Huddleston. Thus, today, says Sanchez, "political repression is bigger in a horizontal sense," with "more political repression against all of the population." Huddleston voices similar concerns: "For me, the most worrisome thing is that the situation will be shoved backwards."

Moreover, for those imprisoned, the circumstances are probably worse now than they were in the past. Explains Sanchez, "When I was in jail, conditions were very bad." Now, however, "former political prisoners say that prisons seemed to be hotels compared to what they are now." There is some good news mixed among the bad. During the 1990's, there were some 1,000 political prisoners. Today, Sanchez notes, there are "only" 220, but that is still the highest in the Western hemisphere and "one of the highest in the world in relative terms."

While it was once "very dangerous" for human-rights activists to meet with the foreign press, Sanchez now does so without obvious retaliation. The regime, he claims, "would like us to be dead, but they know that the political cost would be too high."

Moreover, "we are not an immediate threat to the government." So it "has understood that it doesn't need to have so many political prisoners to maintain control." Huddleston concurs: "As the government has consolidated power, it has less need to execute and imprison" opponents.

There has been some improvement in religious freedom, especially since the Pope's visit in 1998. The government does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Church, but, explained Huddleston, "in every town a religious commission decides whether the Church can provide social services, hold marches, and conduct other activities." Moreover, while Catholic and Protestant churches are flourishing, expectations generated by

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the Pope's visit, such as gaining the right to create church schools, have been disappointed.

Sanchez started his political life as a 16-year-old student activist and member of the socialist youth organization. But he soon became disillusioned: "It became very clear that it had become a totalitarian government." He was expelled from the university and saw his journalist friends fired for criticizing the regime in private conversations.

Despite all that he has gone through, he remains hopeful. "Change will happen in the short or medium term." The "transition could start this very night." True, he notes, Havana's "repression is getting harsher. And the government is not thinking of democratic reforms." But Fidel Castro is the glue holding together a failed system. When the 75-year-old Castro leaves the scene, Sanchez believes, there will be a "power vacuum. And what happens next will be uncontrollable." In Sanchez's view, when the *caudillos*, or strong men, "are not on the scene, their ideologies also end."

Some observers think Cuba may already have entered its transition, which gives the nascent opposition an opportunity to lead. Even now there is popular ferment. "These human-rights activists and independent journalists, doctors, and economists are beginning to mean something," explains Huddleston. They are giving "voice to this enormous frustration of the Cuban people."

For instance, Project Varela, which is named after an 18th-century priest, collected more than 10,000 signatures; under Cuba's constitution, that is enough to require that a plebiscite be held. The movement reflects a generally Christian social-democratic perspective, pushing for free elections, trade unions, and economic liberty. The government attempted to prevent people from coming to Havana and tried to intimidate people into removing their names from the petition. Project Varela is "shaping up as an interesting challenge to the government," says Huddleston. In response, Fidel Castro promoted, through the state's wide panoply of coercive tools, a constitutional amendment to enshrine socialism. Cuban officials dismiss the dissidents as unrepresentative, tools of America, and much more, none of it positive. Some apparatchiks have a hard time even imagining dissent. Ismael Gonzalez, vice minister of culture, notes that "art is, by its nature, belligerent." But only "theoretically speaking," in his view, might that belligerence be expressed as criticism of the government. Naturally, the government limits anything that might "jeopardize the stability or cultural life of the country." He cheerily adds: "Fortunately, we haven't seen that reality in many years."

Cuban officials also contend that they reflect popular sentiment in their own way—consulting with farmers and other groups, for instance. Roberto Alarcon, head of the National Assembly, grandly declares: "I don't think that the Cuban system is less democratic than yours." Of course, he never faces election, and, as the number-three man in the hierarchy, he can be dismissed by Fidel alone.

Equally laughable are the regime's pretensions to economic equality. Today, there are two categories of Cubans: those with dollars and those without.

Cuba flaunts its independence from America, but the greenback rules. The pesos paid by the government to an electrical engineer buy little even when the goods are available; the dollars he earns driving a pedicab ensure that his family has enough to eat.

Indeed, the one certainty in Havana is that any Westerner will be swarmed by Cubans desperate for dollars: "Are you looking for a nice restaurant?" "Where are you from?" "My friend, would you like some cigars?" It wasn't supposed to be this way. Cuba's revolution is more than 40 years old. At least the repressive regime of Fulgencio Batista offered rapid economic growth along with obvious injustice. Fidel Castro has combined persistent poverty with rampant injustice.

Havana blames the U.S. trade embargo for its problems. But Sanchez claims the case is otherwise. He explains that "the government in Cuba owns everything. It owns all the economic enterprises, all the media, the telecommunications system, the banks, and foreign trade."

Thus, the nation's economic problems are the result not of the embargo but of "the impact of totalitarian measures" by a regime that is "repressive and inefficient." Brutal collectivism has frozen this entrepreneurial people in the 1950's.

For his first three decades in power, Castro was able to disguise the impact of his bankrupt policies with abundant Soviet subsidies. The Soviet Union's collapse ended Cuba's free ride. Alfredo Gonzalez Gutierrez, advisor to the minister of economy and planning, calls the succeeding years "the special period." To cope with the deep slide, Havana liberalized its economy a bit, encouraging a modicum of private domestic activity. Cuba also attracted $1.7 billion in foreign investment over the last decade. Nearly two million foreign tourists last year contributed about two billion dollars, supplemented by $800 million in family remittances from expatriate Cubans, mostly in America. Nevertheless, Cuba seems to be treading water, frozen in time. Almost every building suffers from falling plaster and peeling paint; the odd renovation stands out. Potholes abound; driving on any but a main street involves an obstacle course. Pedestrians need to keep their eyes on the ground; a jogger risks life and limb on the uneven streets.

Even more striking are the cars. A third or so are American, mostly from the 1950's and held together with baling wire and duct tape. An equal number of vehicles are Soviet, particularly the small, box-like Lada.

But there is a smattering of modern and even luxury cars—Audis and Mercedes, for instance. These go to foreigners, particularly employees of joint ventures, and well-connected Cubans. They suggest the glimmer of a very different future, should communism in Cuba go the way of that in Russia. Many Cubans wait eagerly. Mike and Alejandro, a 22-year-old dance instructor and a 21-year-old construction worker, respectively, approach two of us as we wander Havana's back streets. They are mulattoes, common in Cuba but still tending to reside at the bottom of the socioeconomic system. Friendly and outgoing, they move easily among crowded streets, decrepit buildings, and cramped homes.

Mike lives with his family in a small apartment, one of a half-dozen down a narrow alcove off a side street. Alejandro's family of six lives in a cramped two-bedroom walk-up. The family's furniture consists of two worn beds, a small sofa, and a couple of chairs. Chicken feet fill the Soviet refrigerator; a large metal pot acts as a bathtub.

Each family gets a 3" by 1 1/2" bar of soap, a box of laundry detergent, and a bottle of cooking oil each month. Each person also is entitled to a kilo of beans, two kilos of rice, a smattering of meat, and three eggs a month—if they are available. Mike's family shops at a small corner *bordega* that looks like a shop out of the 19th century, with a concrete floor, wooden counter, chalkboard, and small metal scale.

Rice and beans sit in big sacks on the

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floor behind the counter; the shelves are largely empty, hosting only three bottles of milk, one jar of cooking oil, and a few other products. The chalkboard lists the goods theoretically available, along with the price of those actually in stock. Only children seven and under get milk, and then not every day. Down the street, people line up to buy one piece of bread a day, cooked in an ancient bakery with a concrete floor, a large iron bin for the dough, and an open-fire oven.

There's no path for upward mobility. For most Cubans, their only chance is to search for foreigners with dollars, guide them around the city, and then hit them up for a few bucks—to supplement incomes which average the equivalent of ten dollars per month.

Some Cubans have found a way to make the system work, however. Just three blocks from the primitive *bordega* where Mike's and Alejandro's families bring their ration books sits a large supermarket, its shelves full of soda, mineral water, soap, and food. All prices are in dollars. Dollar stores abound throughout the city. A majority of Cubans get enough dollars to buy some milk for their families or a bit of extra rice when the ration runs out—or, occasionally, to indulge their children in sweets.

Then there is Carlos, who explains that he "represents Spanish capital." He lives in a two-story house in a nice Havana suburb. The living room is filled with modern furniture and sports a huge TV; a fine oil painting hangs on the wall, and a large porcelain statue graces the entry. The bathroom tile would look elegant in any American home. A pool and generator supplement a house surrounded by a security fence and guarded by two Dobermans and a German Shepherd. A Mercedes sits in the driveway. Carlos hosts a lunch for the foreign visitors; we start with drinks and salad. Then we feast on sausages, barbequed on his grill. The next course is massive pork chops. The meal is capped by bowels of lobster tails.

I ask Roberto Alarcon about this striking contradiction to the revolution. Lazily lounging in a finely tailored suit and fondling an unlit cigar, Alarcon responds that the situation is fairer than a decade ago, when it was illegal for anyone to hold dollars—though some did so anyway. "Technically speaking, you don't now have a legal border. You have an economic border." That is precisely the problem. The fact that an estimated 60 percent of people have some access to dollars means that more people are able to improve their living standards. Paradoxically, however, that makes the inequality even starker. The revolution is a mockery for those who have no dollars.

It is bad enough to create an impoverished tyranny in order to ensure equality. But to create an impoverished tyranny and then deliver inequality?

The final defense of the elite that runs Cuba is the country's social-service system, particularly in education and health. Yet this system serves a political purpose. Although the government has devoted much of its limited resources to education and health care, such programs, observes Sanchez, "form part of the official propaganda system."

Moreover, virtually nothing works. For instance, according to Mike and Alejandro, the official food rations can only be stretched to last three weeks. Mike says simply: "My family is hungry."

Even professionals within the system, who defend the socialist ideal, acknowledge the practical shortcomings of their vaunted social system: inadequate resources, malfunctioning equipment, and nonexistent supplies. For all of the chatter about high-quality health care, the only way to get many pharmaceuticals is

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to buy them with dollars. Poverty, whether equally shared or not, is no one's friend.

Sanchez and others like him plan to struggle on. Many dissidents "leave the country," he observes; indeed, "the government would prefer that many Cubans leave." However, as Margaret Thatcher once said, "When people want to leave the country, it is the government that should leave." He adds: "This is my country. The solution is not that the Cubans should just leave their country. I think we should stay here and change things."

Sanchez looks overseas for support, because international pressure keeps him and many of his colleagues out of jail. As in the former Soviet bloc, the foreign media "help protect the dissidents."

He also suggests that America lift its embargo against Cuba, which includes a travel ban, with limited exceptions (for journalists, for example). "I think the best policy would be for friendly relations to exist between both our countries."

Indeed, Sanchez argues, "It is clear that the Cuban government really doesn't want the embargo to be lifted," despite its public protestations to the contrary. Even some U.S. officials privately concur. Castro probably feels secure enough to allow more tourists but not to tolerate full, open economic relations. Sanchez's argument is simple: "The sanction policy by the U.S. government has allowed the Cuban government to have a good alibi to justify the failure of the totalitarian model in Cuba." Because the problems "are self-inflicted," he notes, "it is very good [for Havana] to have this sort of war with the U.S government."

Moreover, contact with foreigners is likely to breed discontent. "This type of government tries to hide the reality of the country" from its citizens, he notes. "The more information that you give to the public about the reality, the better for us and the rest of the Cuban people."

In his view, "it is absurd that there is a prohibition on Americans traveling to Cuba." The only plausible argument for the present policy, observes Sanchez, is the fact that dollars spent in Cuba "will be used for repression."

Yet thousands of Cuban-Americans, who zealously support the embargo, travel to Cuba every year. Cuban-Americans also send $800 million in remittances to relatives in the island nation. By their own actions, they are subsidizing Castro's regime.

Maintaining the 41-year-old embargo—indeed, strengthening it, as in 1992 and 1996—is merely reinforcing failure. This argument is gaining ground on Capitol Hill, winning over even the likes of House Majority Leader Richard Armey (R-TX). The potential economic benefit to American industry is obvious. More important, however, is the subversive potential of American visitors and dollars.

Whether the embargo stays or goes, Cuba's future will be determined by men and women like Sanchez. Americans can hope for reform in Cuba, but, as Vicki Huddleston emphatically argues, "Decisions for Cubans have to be made by Cubans. They are putting their lives on the line."

Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a former special assistant to President Ronald Reagan.

Letter From Venice

by Andrei Navrozov

Strange Customs

◆

I had sworn I would not buy any carpets, and, in the end, I did keep that promise, but then one scorching hot day my friends finally came to pry me loose of the snug little corner of the hotel bar. Before I knew it, I was in the market, buying a preternaturally heavy wrought-iron table with four matching chairs for the balcony and arranging the transport of these precious curiosities home to Venice. It isn't really true that I'm a compulsive lounger, by the way, an Oblomov type who has lived in the West long enough to learn how to cover his tracks by posing as a writer; at times, I'm capable of great displays of energy, as everybody realized on one particular occasion during that stay in Morocco when, in a restaurant less authentically Levantine than many a British bank, I collared a passing waiter and persuaded him to sweet-talk his mother into asking us to lunch on the following day.

The meal was served belowground inside a mud edifice that, bunched up like a grape against a cluster of identical dwellings, belonged to a Berber village 150 kilometers—three-and-a-half hours of faulty suspension and tourist suspense, relieved only intermittently in the eclipses of police checkpoints—from the king's palace, which, as even university students and other republican scum would agree, is a charming way of referring to downtown Marrakesh. There were flies in the room. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that there was a room in the flies, because whenever one took wing, it exposed a fly-sized grayness of the whitewash beneath, like a child's puzzle with a piece missing. *Oh, to revert to type,* I whispered as in prayer. Why couldn't I have stayed Oblomov and never bothered to change out of my old dressing gown?

But then the food, which I had convinced myself I would not be able to countenance despite the enormity of the embarrassment that would surely engulf all concerned, began to arrive. First came the honey, wild honey with freshly baked bread, and I can only say that, speaking objectively, it tasted the way Heaven is supposed to taste upon the lips of a devout Muslim. Speaking subjectively, it was like nothing I had ever tasted, and by the end of the afternoon, after all the honey and the roast goat and the mint tea and the fresh almonds, I was ready to start on the flies; how delightful they were, I thought, how frisky yet not without a certain gravitas, and besides, did not our own Scripture ridicule those who would strain at a gnat? All of which was a way of congratulating myself for my ingenuity, my daring, my energy, and for having broken for good with those lethargic ways which some people have been led to believe are second nature to a Russian writer manqué.

I then returned to Venice, having forgotten all about my spurious acquisition in the *souk* until months later, when a letter headlined *Dogana di Venezia* arrived in the post. Now, you understand that encounters with bureaucracy, of which a customs officer anywhere in the world is a classic exponent, are fraught with consequence under the best of circumstances; that, here in Italy, bureaucracy is renowned as a gross caricature on the concept of byzantine; and that Venice, being a city on water, and, by tradition, the most byzantine in Italy, makes finding your way through the official maze as near a logistic impossibility as a native can imagine. Nonetheless, my old friend and new landlord, Hugues L——, volunteered to come along, and, a few days thereafter, the pair of us were well and truly lost in the low underbrush of alder and willow that encircles Marco Polo

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Airport, crawling along the leaves of a gigantic asphalt clover connecting the airport's innumerable offices, warehouses, and customs points. *Oh, to revert to type*, I whispered. Who needs that stupid Moroccan table and chairs anyway? Why couldn't I have stayed at home? For what lay before our wide, panicking eyes was a world *sui generis*, as much a law unto itself as the remotest Berber village.

The door opened with a screech. I'd heard that kind of squeaking before, in the English countryside, where it is the customary way for a sodden door frame to address a winter veranda, seasonally emptied of furniture to make room for the oversize, mahogany echo, like some tragic heroine receiving an ineffectual benediction that is at once drowned by the thunder of overpowering fate in the orchestra. That, and the light tinkle of those old panes of glass, which time has slightly loosened in their casements. Not the acoustic effect, at any rate, one associates with bureaucratic institutions.

And then I saw the office's automatic coffee-dispensing machine, and here's what the labels next to the buttons said:

- WITHOUT SUGAR
- EXTRA SUGAR
- ESPRESSO
- MOCCACINO
- LONG
- TEA WITH LEMON
- MACCHIATO
- HOT CHOCOLATE
- CAPPUCCINO
- MILK
- CAPPUCCINO WITH CHOCOLATE ON TOP
- LATTE MACCHIATO

A young woman, with just the kind of hair Hollywood hairdressers become rich by promising their richer clients, came out of one office cubicle and flitted toward another. In her hand was a sheet of paper, which she held as if it were a vial of nitroglycerine, so manicured and red were her nails. Another young woman, dressed from neck scarf to thigh boot in this season's Roberto Cavalli animal prints, which looked so dramatic on what her envious girlfriends must have long conceded was a perfect figure, was swaying in and out of the pay phone in the corridor—"Darling, but why must we? . . . I mean, why should I? . . . The Maldives . . . "—in an attitude that conveyed southern langor, limitless leisure, and qualified longing, all delicately tempered by easily acquired wealth.

Come on, Hugues and I looked at each other, *this is unreal. Where are we?* I walked into the first cubicle, where I saw a desk occupied by a man in a bespoke corduroy suit—even Ralph Lauren would not have dared to mass-produce so rollickingly optimistic a social statement—and dark-brown loafers by Tanino Crisci. This I saw because his feet were on the desk, inches away from my face, as I extracted from my pocket the fateful letter headlined *Dogana di Venezia*. "Ah yes," he said breezily, "and what is in the package?" "Well," I began stammering, "I was in Morocco, you see, it's a wrought-iron table and . . . "

Once, in London, after a house of ours had been burgled, a man with an Hercule Poirot mustache, dressed in a white suit with a white panama hat, rang the doorbell and produced an engraved card, but the only question Detective Inspector Hindmarsh had come to ask was whether the stolen set of silver "would have included" fish knives. From the indulgent disdain with which he asked it, it was clear that the right answer was *no, how could you, we're respectable people, 'twas Georgian, this is Chelsea, for God's sake*. And here, in the eyes of a provincial bureaucrat—one who would have been quick to show his mettle as a politically discontented, privately miserable, and malevolently megalomaniacal little viper, at once pathetic and vicious, in every other bureaucratic environment anywhere else in the civilized world—I was reading the same indulgent disdain, writ, if anything, larger.

" . . . And chairs," he repeated, tongue-in-cheek. "So the commercial value, one may surmise, is not very great?" Tactfully, he shuffled some papers to give me time to conceal my embarrassment. "Then why don't you pay the tax on the transport costs, let us say"—he came up with a derisory sum, something like $30—"and we'll forget the import duties altogether, shall we? Would you oblige me by taking this document to the cashier, down the hall and to the left?" He picked out a few rubber stamps, almost certainly at random, from the colorful array in front of him, and unleashed them on the *bolletta importazione*.

The cashiers were two, a young woman and an older man, seated in the same room behind facing desks of golden oak. She was called Ada. She was beautiful and exotic and wore a short Valentino skirt and the wicked title of *collaboratore tributario*. Her colleague or admirer, perhaps her lover, looked like a Roman senator and asked me if I was Russian. "Yes," I said, "a Russian writer, living in Venice." "You know," he said, withdrawing the $30 from my hand in an absent-minded arc, "of course I follow the new directions taken by literature in your country"—*"le tendenze nuove"* were the actual words he used—"but I still prefer the *ottocento*, your nineteenth century. Even your own older contemporaries, Bitov, Iskander, people like that, they seem somehow lacking in conviction. Don't you agree?" *Come on, man, gimme a break*, I moaned to myself—Hugues was waiting in the corridor—*this is unreal*. "Will you take a coffee?" asked Ada. *"Macchiato? Lungo? Poco zucchero?"* And, once we were in the boat with my Marrakesh souvenirs, and I looked at Hugues, still smiling out of one side of his mouth as if struck by paralysis and shaking his head in epochal disbelief, I simply had to congratulate myself for my daring, for my energy, and for having broken at last with those lethargic ways that some people have been led to believe are second nature to me.

Reader, do you know of a new world? Take me there.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

LIBERAL ARTS

DEAD CAT FOR DEAD CAT'S SAKE?

"John Deom's *Cat and the Fish Bowl* is a virtuoso example of contemporary realist painting. Rendered with photographic precision, this still life painting features a cat skull, daylilies, snail shells and a blue and white porcelain bowl, all carefully arranged upon a mirrored surface. . . .

"Traditionally, still life paintings were not just beautiful objects meant to grace the homes of the emerging middle class. . . . Built upon the groundwork of symbolism in the art of the Middle Ages, every object in an early still life painting can be seen as a metaphor for a larger idea. . . .

"While *Cat and the Fish Bowl* acknowledges the past, its power does not come from a medieval code that is largely unknown to contemporary society. . . "

—from a "Collection Spotlight" in the Rockford Art Museum's 2002 catalogue

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Baghdad or Pyongyang?

Last October, North Korea announced that it has a nuclear-weapons program. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld confirmed that North Korea already has a "small number" of nuclear weapons, and a Pentagon official later added that the United States thought Pyongyang had two nuclear bombs.

The stunning revelations sent shockwaves around the world, but the White House reaction was surprisingly restrained. Spokesman Scott McClellan said "We are seeking a peaceful solution. This is best addressed through diplomatic channels at this point." McClellan then went on to describe Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein as a "homicidal dictator who is addicted to weapons of mass destruction." He did not comment on allegations that North Korea is also pursuing chemical and biological weapons programs.

This is all very curious. Suppose that you, a superwealthy and powerful homesteader in a mansion on a hill, have some conflicts with two unruly gang leaders from the wrong side of the tracks. One is Middle Eastern; the other, Oriental. One gang leader is said to "gas his own people." The other starves his charges to death, in the name of self-sufficiency.

The former, a nasty brute with no powerful backers, tried to take over one of your clients' properties a decade ago, assuming that it was OK with you. Once you changed your mind about *that*, you taught him a lesson that was—you now claim—not memorable enough. He is still around, cornered in his seedy abode, but he is powerless to threaten you. As you go into extraordinary paroxysms of rage about his alleged transgressions, he wonders what he needs to do to stay out of your way. Even if he did dream of getting back at you, he has no means to do so now, and there is no likelihood of his acquiring some in the coming decades.

The other gang leader is a far nastier piece of work. He is hell-bent on acquiring serious weapons of mass destruction—in fact, he already has some and wants to use the hardware as a tool in his dealings with you and your allies.

So what do you do?

If you follow George Washington's advice, you stick to your side of the track (well armed, to be sure) and let the bad guys over there do their thing—whatever unpleasantness it might entail for their subjects and their unlucky neighbors—as long as they stay off of your turf.

Ah, but you like being the boss. If you are serious about being the only sheriff in town, however, you will prioritize and go after your chief rival first. You declare the rules; you define the consequences. Having, or actively seeking, "weapons of mass destruction" invites blind, automatic retaliation—nothing personal.

On the other hand, if you are a coward or a fraud, or if your priorities are determined by someone else, you will go after the softer target. In other words, you will pretend that Kim Jong Il is the lesser threat—he has "only" two nukes, after all—while Saddam Hussein remains the real rogue. And so President Bush described the North Korean admission merely as "troubling and sobering."

His statement was puzzling. Mr. Bush included North Korea in the "axis of evil" in his State of the Union address last January. If he was serious about the threat posed by this dangerous rogue nation, what is so "troubling and sobering" about North Korea's recent admission?

It seems that last winter's "axis of evil" was purely rhetorical after all, its pecking order dependent on expediency. Saddam—the real target all along—is a secularist dictator who appeals to the Baathist variety of Arab nationalism but whose vanity and ambition guarantee that he will get no external support when the going gets tough.

North Korea, by contrast is a zany neo-Stalinist hell on Earth, whose minimal external connections go only as far as Beijing. President Bush's "axis of evil" rhetoric, however, sought not to describe reality but to blur it. How inconvenient, then, that one of the evil triumvirate has proved to be seriously demented. In a pragmatic and nonideological scheme of things, assorted North Korean sites should become more attractive targets for Cruise missiles, airborne assaults, and special operations than Baghdad or Basra.

The Bush administration, however, continues to minimize the North Korean threat. For Bush's team, there is no predictable correlation between a genuine threat to national security and its processing through the decisionmaking machinery. Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz will not allow national-security threats to get in the way of their grand Middle Eastern designs, so the North Korean bombshell must be ignored. Washington's uncertainty is reflected in the long delay between Undersecretary James Kelly's briefing on the program when he visited Pyongyang on October 3 and the announcement by the State Department almost a fortnight later.

Scarcely less alarming was Pyongyang's claim, reported by U.S. officials in early October, that North Korea also has unspecified "more powerful" weapons—probably chemical and biological—as all of its neighbors and most weapons-proliferation specialists have long believed. Nevertheless, we are still told that the war against Iraq is a must. No new facts from the outer fringes of the Orient will be allowed to disrupt the Iraqi war scheme.

The North Korean revelation was not an "admission" but a calculated warning: "Don't try with us what you're doing with Saddam." Perhaps Comrade Kim is not demented at all—in fact, it seems that his timing was exquisite, with U.S. military forces headed for the Persian Gulf. The United States simply cannot fight on both fronts at once.

We will have the Marines in the streets of Baghdad before winter is out. Meanwhile, there will be a Fat Boy or two in North Korea's arsenal, out of America's sight and mind, a mere 60 seconds away from tens of thousands of American troops on the southern side of the border. Saddam may have a hearty posthumous laugh.

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ECONOMICS

Wall Street's Turn

by David A. Hartman

While a long parade of executives has exchanged tailored pinstripes for orange jumpsuits, an even more deserving group of miscreants have thus far eluded their just deserts—those executives' Wall Street overlords, who wrote the script for the latest and greatest of bull markets, directed the hucksters, and set their standards.

The excesses of the bull market must be put in proper historical perspective. There were substantial reasons for the "New Millennium" market: Lower interest rates and lower rates of inflation warranted higher estimates of prospective income streams and of an accelerated rate of growth of productivity—all of which, unfortunately, were extrapolated into the future.

Furthermore, the boom in U.S. securities was fueled by two sources of demand that will not be repeated: redeployment of pension assets in equities from 50 to 70 percent of total holdings and a balance-of-payments deficit that has ballooned to an unsustainable five percent of GDP, funded by foreign purchases of U.S. securities.

As the bull market aged, by the latter part of the 1990's, the growth of corporate profits was bound to slow down. In 1997, corporate profits—both before and after taxes—peaked, and they have been in steady decline for five years. Nor was profit growth for the entire decade particularly remarkable. During the 90's, corporations' median return on assets remained the same as it had been for the period of 1960-99 and well below that of the 60's (a comparable period of growth).

If the growth of corporate profits from 1990 to 1997 is valued at the lower prevailing interest rates and adjusted for the typical boom-compared-to-recession rise in multiples, then the year-end stock prices in 1997 are virtually reproduced and justified. That cannot be said for the further 50 percent increase in valuations, in the face of declining profits, between 1997 and 1999, when the stock market finally peaked.

That brings us to the "bull" component of the "New Millennium" stock market. Why did this exaggerated growth of stock prices occur? Both "blue sky" laws governing new issues of securities and regulations for those already listed make it illegal to market financial securities on the basis of fraudulent, misleading, or even insufficient information. Furthermore, the sellers of securities have a duty to disclose conflicts of interest, such as touting issues they are selling or having undisclosed financial interests in the companies whose securities they are marketing. However, such annoyances have not seriously restrained Wall Street brokerage houses in the past nor resulted in serious repercussions for them.

In the final years of the bull market, from 1997 to 1999, the misleading of investors reached a perfection that is historically unparalleled. Investment bankers sold investors, large and small, trillions of dollars of securities on the basis of "momentum," "projected" earnings, and their analysts' tongue-in-cheek "buy" recommendations—all without reference to the fundamental information necessary to try to make sound investments: earnings trends, dividends, cash flow, liquidity, and asset values. The perceived values of securities became detached from the hidden realities, and the market valuations of stocks careened to unprecedented levels.

Perhaps the most obvious misinformation that brokers propagated can be found in the covert transition from reported "P/E ratios," defined as the ratio of share price to actual after-tax earnings for the most recently reported 12 months. First, P/E ratios were replaced with price to *forecast* earnings after tax (usually *double* most recent earnings), which resulted in P/E ratios that appeared to be halved. Then came "forecast" price to "EDITA" per share—price to forecast operating earnings before interest, depreciation, and income taxes (as if these charges to earnings are of no consequence). While real P/E ratios had escalated to levels more than *double* those ever seen before, this reality was obfuscated by these bogus P/E ratios, which were used to claim that bloated share prices remained at normative levels.

In a day and age in which the Golden Rule for corporations is "maximize shareholder value," the acceptable normative performance standard for stocks (and options) became the "20-20 vision." That means 20-percent growth and 20-percent return on equity. (The absurdity of such an expectation is obvious: If all American stocks grew at that rate for two decades, corporate profits would equal the total value of the U.S. economy!)

Corporate CEOs got the message: Forecast 20-percent growth and 20-percent return—or fake it. So doubled earnings are *still* being predicted by companies, despite the fact that the U.S. economy is in a serious recession.

Does this provide any clues as to why the fictitious earnings of Enron, WorldCom, and the like have become so widespread? Either CEOs and auditors play ball, or Wall Street has them replaced with more "performance-oriented" players.

The Securities and Exchange Commission and state securities regulators are supposed to be the investors' cavalry, riding to the rescue—but they arrive long after the investors have been scalped. The New York attorney general fined Merrill Lynch $100 million for conflicts of interest resulting in misleading analyst recommendations, and other states are expected to follow suit. Congress is preparing to investigate whether the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act has contributed to abuses by allowing the merger of investment banking and commercial banking.

As of mid-October 2002, the stock market had lost eight trillion dollars in value, of which more than four trillion dollars represents unconscionably bloated values that ate up the life savings of many small investors. How are they to secure restitution? (Where are the junkyard-dog class-action attorneys when you really need them?)

The lawsuits against corporations and executives for fraudulent reporting of earnings address only the tip of the iceberg. No one has yet addressed the trillions of dollars investors lost to miscreant investment bankers and brokers. It is time to clean out the Augean stable of Wall Street—taking no prisoners in the process.

David A. Hartman, a recently retired banker, is president of The Rockford Institute's board of directors.

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MULTICULTURALISM

Race Relations

by Mark Fellows

I was part of a group of several hundred social workers, nurses, and other community health-care providers whose employers shelled out a lot of money for a conference that promised to help us work more effectively with "minority populations." In fact, precious little attention was paid to the people with whom we work. Instead, for six hours the (mostly white) audience was informed how racist it was by a dapper black college professor from New York.

After you have been through a few of these dog-and-pony shows, you learn to come prepared. Having brought along enough office paperwork and reactionary literature to pass the day quite comfortably, I settled in the back row and prepared to ignore the entire presentation. At the front of the room, our speaker, Professor Hardy, prepared to start an argument.

After ingratiating himself to the audience with jokes and banter, Hardy showed a video of some young, white American punks saying some very politically incorrect things about black Americans. The video was an obvious provocation, and, when it ended, the blacks in our audience bit hard, complaining that the kids were racist. This complaint was quickly generalized to include white America—another fairly obvious provocation, to which the whites in the room bit hard.

The whites agreed with the blacks that everyone in America was racist (except for them) but tended to defuse the race issue by making analogies to other polarizing issues, such as class, sex, and "sexual orientation." As I marveled at the number of aging Marxists in the audience who wanted to talk about the class war, a large black woman cut them short with an accusation: "You're changing the subject because you're uncomfortable talking about race." She was probably right, but from my seat in the back of the room, nobody seemed that uncomfortable. Professor Hardy gave his audience a (rhetorical) group hug: "I feel totally honored to be here," he gushed. "You're so gutsy, tackling this head on." Then it was time for a break.

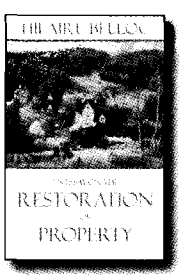
After the break, the feminists complained that they were being ignored. Although nobody else seemed to mind this, Dr. Hardy allowed a few of them to make some fairly predictable comments about patriarchy. Then he smoothly moved from sex back to race. (I got the idea he had made this segue before.) The only issue he fumbled was homosexuality—to be precise, "transgender sexuality." "I work for the Minnesota AIDS Project," a woman complained, "and even there, when a person who has had a sex-change operation comes through the door, we act like a devil has walked into the room." Our speaker was unusually silent after this remark. Later in the day, he confessed that his one visit to a gay bar was "a very, very, very enlightening experience," because he realized "where I need to work . . . my homophobia is so thick . . . my head and my heart are in two different places . . . "

More interesting than the dimensions and location of Dr. Hardy's "homophobia" was the intellectual framework in which he placed black and white Americans. Both are "victims" of "Eurocentric ideology," a codeword for Christianity and—from Dr. Hardy's perspective anyway—the white racism responsible for slavery. He believes that many black Americans presently suffer from the residuals of slavery, the symptoms of which include rage, violence, "psychological homelessness," and mistrust of whites.

The doctor's prescription was a "paradigmatic shift" from "Eurocentric ideology" to a multicultural perspective that "honors differences." He spoke so glowingly of "the healing potential of conversation and dialogue" that the very words almost seemed an incantation. This went over quite well, although an incorrigible ne'er-do-well in the back row noted two flies in the ointment. First, Dr. Hardy and his audience engaged in dialogue all day, and nobody sounded healed; if anything, people sounded inflamed. Second, try as they might, the audience had difficulty "honoring differences." As one affable, large black man put it, "Why don't people of color get along with each other?"

No one wanted to dialogue about this, so Dr. Hardy showed another video. This one contained interviews with middle-class black Americans. All were well dressed and well spoken. All believed white Americans to be guilty of a number of unusual conspiracies, including engineering AIDS as a genetic plot against blacks and Snapple Iced Tea being owned by the Ku Klux Klan. The illustration of the Boston Tea Party on Snapple labels, the blacks in the video believed, contains slave ships. They also claimed that the "K" on the Snapple label was an abbreviation for "Klan." The explanation that the "K" was, in fact, an abbreviation for "kosher" was greeted with skepticism.

The point of the video—that blacks don't trust whites—was less debatable than the conclusion that this mistrust would dissolve if only whites would admit (preferably over and over again) how



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awful they are. While this solution appeared deeply satisfying to many in the room, it seemed an unlikely remedy for what Dr. Hardy quite correctly calls the "spiritual, existential homelessness" of black Americans.

Spiritual homelessness is a condition blacks share with whites, as well as the other races that inhabit our so-called United States. When religion is banned as a guiding force in society, culture, and government, everyone feels dislocated. We just weren't created to believe that religion is unimportant; this is an idea that has to be enforced.

Other ideas that have to be enforced spring from what Dr. Hardy referred to as "Eurocentric ideology." He meant "white Christianity," but the Eurocentric ideology that blacks should really despise is not true Christianity but the unholy blend of Unitarianism, Masonry, and Marxism that passes for religion over here. Marxism, in particular, has expertly inflamed the natural mistrust between races into hatred and paranoia and has exploited slavery for its own divisive purposes. One of the more benign, if woefully misguided, consequences is the seminar on race relations.

These days, multiculturalism is making a bid to become the newest man-made religion. The different races and sexes are its various denominations, and its chief dogma is unity. Its main tool is dialogue; its main enemy is what's left of Western civilization.

Mark Fellows writes from South St. Paul, Minnesota.

SPORTS

Real World Basketball

by Miodrag Zarkovic

"I don't care who didn't play for the American team," boasted Dejan Bodiroga, captain of the Yugoslav national team that won the gold medal on September 8 at the 2002 World Basketball Championship for Men in Indianapolis. "That is their problem, not ours. We won the game, and that's what only matters. If they want to beat us, they'll have to send some better players next time." The Yugoslavs beat Argentina to win the gold medal, after a shocking victory over the United States in the quarterfinals.

It is true that Shaquille O'Neal, Kobe Bryant, Allen Iverson, and Jason Kidd did not play for the American team, the first to be made up of NBA players to lose in international competition. However, Bodiroga's point is also valid: There is no reason why Yugoslav players should feel any less triumphant. The Americans lost three games in this championship, the gold medal, and their reputation for being unbeatable. And whatever anyone may say, it is much harder to defeat the team that showed up to play against you than the one that did not.

Nor was the American team a bad one; quite the contrary. Each of the 12 players is an NBA star. Reggie Miller is an All-Star veteran who won gold medals at the World Championship in Toronto in 1994 and at the Olympics in Atlanta in 1996. Jermaine O'Neal was the most improved NBA player one season ago. Andre Miller led the league in assists last season, while Ben Wallace was the best defender, rebounder, and shot-blocker. Paul Pierce and Baron Davis are also All-Star players. Head coach George Karl's team was packed with talent, and Karl had experience competing at the international level, having coached Spain's Real Madrid a decade ago.

But, as the *Los Angeles Times* put it after Yugoslavia eliminated the United States from the medal round, "America doesn't have the edge in stars any more, only in megastars."

That still leaves some questions: What edge does Yugoslavia have? What enabled a small Balkan country of eight million people to win back-to-back World Championships?

For those who know the Serbs, the answer is a no-brainer: patriotism. Unlike the biggest American basketball stars, who turned down the opportunity to play for their country, Yugoslavia's stars accepted the invitation from the national team's coach the moment they received it. That fact shaped the outcome of the first World Basketball Championship to be held on American soil, in the country that gave birth to the game.

There is a great difference between the offer the American players received and the one that came addressed to the Yugoslav players. Under the system used for composing the U.S. roster, an American player, once invited, is guaranteed a spot on the national team. More than a year before the tournament, USA Basketball announces the names of 12 players who will represent America. Changes are made only if some of the invited players are injured or otherwise unavailable.

The Yugoslav players, on the other hand, must fight for their spots. The Yugoslav head coach, like the coaches of countries other than America, first announces a list of 16 candidates. Inevitably, he is criticized for his choices, since there are always uninvited players who feel they deserve to participate. (This past summer, Jovo Stanojevic, one of the most talented centers in Europe, started a public dispute with coach Svetislav Pesic when Stanojevic didn't find his name on the list.) After that, all 16 players attend preliminary practices. A few weeks later, the coach decides who will stay on the team and which four players are out (and immediately receives his second barrage of criticism). Only then do the real practices begin.

America's megastars made various excuses for not participating in the World Championship. Shaq had scheduled surgery on his toe for the beginning of September. Kobe Bryant explained that he is interested only in the Olympics and not in the World Championship (an opinion shared by many basketball fans in America before this year's tournament). Chris Weber couldn't make it to Indianapolis because his brother was getting married. Iverson was engaged in an armed conflict with his wife. Jason Kidd and Ray Allen, originally on the U.S. roster, withdrew because of minor (and doubtful) injuries.

On the Yugoslav side, Predrag Stojakovic, who is regarded as one of the best shooters in the NBA and who could have used a summer vacation after a long, arduous season with the Sacramento Kings (reaching the Western Conference Finals against the Lakers), forgot about his swollen right ankle and put himself under Pesic's command. Vladimir Radmanovic and Predrag Drobnjak of the Seattle Supersonics accepted Pesic's invitation, as did Marko Jaric, one of the top point guards in Europe, who was heading into his rookie NBA season (he signed with the L.A. Clippers this past summer), and Igor Rakocevic (who has been acquired by the Minnesota Timberwolves).

Even Vlade Divac, a 34-year-old NBA veteran who had already won nine medals with the Serbian team, reversed

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his earlier decision to retire from international competition and went to the Yugoslav training camp at the end of July. Divac wanted to be part of a team that had a chance to make history by being the first to beat a selection of American NBA players.

The only Yugoslav star who didn't play was Zeljko Rebraca, starting center for the Detroit Pistons and one of the greatest European players of all time. He was a key member of the Yugoslav team that had won the previous World Championship, held in Athens four years ago. Rebraca skipped Indianapolis in order to prepare himself for the next NBA season, and he was widely criticized by the Serbian public for his decision.

American megastars who chose not to play on the U.S. team were spared criticism at home. Those who did play, however, were condemned repeatedly to answer the question, "Will you miss Shaq and Kobe?" And so, perhaps, they didn't prepare themselves for their opponents at the World Championship. Instead, each may have been preoccupied with proving that he belonged on the U.S. team; that he and his teammates could attract fans' attention, too; that he was as big a star as all those how-great-would-it-be-if-they-were-here players.

That was a normal human reaction to the press and public attention, but it was also a fatal one. While American players were dealing with p.r. problems first and team tactics second, the Yugoslav national team was focusing on beating the United States at home and winning the gold medal. The Yugoslavs were lifting weights, doing fast-break drills, improving their defense—even starting to like each other (not an easy accomplishment for any group of star players).

Of course, the Yugoslav players had some pressure, too. The Serbian basketball-crazy public was far from modest in its expectations for the World Championship. Anything less than first place in Indianapolis would have been deemed a failure. Anything less than a win over the American NBA team would have been a national disaster on par with the NATO bombing. This pressure was much more like that felt by "Dream Team I" at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona—go out there and prove you are, indeed, the best—than like that felt by "Dream Team V" in Indianapolis—go out there and prove you are not bad.

It would be unfair not to mention one other team that made basketball history in Indianapolis: Argentina. The Argentineans went to the 2002 World Championship with their country struggling through a devastating economic depression. The players received no money from the national basketball federation. They paid for their own trip to America, their hotel rooms, even their jerseys. But they defeated the United States a day before the Yugoslavs did, in round-robin play. Argentina was undefeated in the tournament until the memorable final, which Yugoslavia won in overtime.

"Argentineans are the losers too, because they don't look so special anymore," wrote *Sports Illustrated* columnist Marty Burns after Yugoslavia eliminated the United States from reaching the medal round. That is probably true, but Argentina's victory over the United States will always be remembered as the first defeat of an all-NBA team in international competition.

The outcome of the contest between Yugoslavia and the United States proved at least three important points: First, the number of NBA players per team doesn't decide the winner. The hero of the Yugoslavs' dramatic 81 to 78 victory was Milan Gurovic, a player who is unknown to Americans and who doesn't have a minute of NBA experience. Six minutes before the end of the game, Gurovic had scored five points. Yugoslavia trailed by ten, and everyone thought the American team would win the game and go on to the gold medal round. Then Gurovic hit three consecutive three-pointers and turned the game upside down. He triggered a great comeback, and the Yugoslav team showed stronger nerve than the Americans coming down the home stretch.

Second, in the clash of two teams of similar quality, the group with higher team spirit will prevail. By "team spirit," I don't mean smiles for photographers or polite phrases about your colleagues at press conferences; I mean teamwork on the court. I mean doing the dirty work under the basket, where elbows rule, in order to create openings for your back court; picking up a man whom your teammate lost in defensive rotations; assisting, rather than scoring, when your teammate needs help finding his game.

Third, the Americans, perhaps, should stop calling the NBA champions "world champions." Basketball is not like football or baseball, which are played only by Americans (with minor exceptions). The NBA is the strongest, but by no means the only, basketball competition in this part of solar system.

American players, coaches, and even sportswriters have claimed that they did not know how important the World Championship is to the rest of the world. They may still not know that America's defeat by Yugoslavia is even bigger news than the tournament itself. After the game, a few thousand Bulgarians gathered in central Sofia to celebrate the Yugoslavs' win. French soldiers stationed in Kosovo, the Serbian region controlled by NATO-led U.N. forces, participated in local Serbs' celebrations after the game. The story of the United States' elimination was the top sporting news all over the world, even on the BBC, which is traditionally uninterested in basketball, and in Croatia, which is traditionally uninterested in Serbian triumphs.

Since sports sanctions were lifted in 1995, Yugoslavia has won three European championships, two World Championships, and a silver medal at the Atlanta Olympics. A nation tortured by eight decades of joint statehood with its enemies, five decades of communism, and ten years of wars and sanctions keeps sending a worthy group of basketball players to every international tournament. That deserves some "world" status too, doesn't it?

Americans can learn from the Yugoslavs, who—while no less popular among their countrymen than American stars are, and who are also well paid by the biggest European and NBA ballclubs—didn't forget their basketball fundamentals. The Americans, many agree, did.

Before the 2002 World Championship, coach George Karl stated: "We'll have to change our way of thinking to prepare for Yugoslavia." He probably didn't think his words would be echoed in the American sports press after the tournament. But they were.

Miodrag Zarkovic is a sports journalist who writes from Belgrade.

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by George McCartney

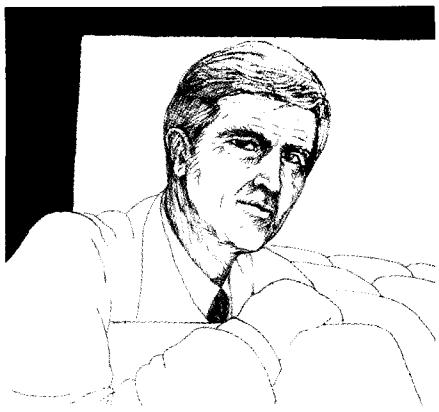
Cinematic Imagination Under Siege

I recently proposed Don Siegel's 1956 science-fiction film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* as required viewing for directors who have lost their way. I was thinking of all those filmmakers who deploy multimillion-dollar special effects to compensate for what they lack in cinematic resourcefulness. Siegel's movie is just the tonic they need. Of course, there are any number of other low-budget pictures from earlier decades that might prove equally restorative, especially those made between 1940 and, say, 1975. In the sci-fi genre, Howard Hawks' *The Thing* (1951) and John Frankenheimer's *Seconds* (1967) come to mind. In a more realistic vein, *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *On the Waterfront* (1954) are highly instructive. As different as these films are in theme, style, and talent, they all have one thing in common: They exercise genuine cinematic imagination. As such, they constitute a potent antidote to what's currently infecting the multiplexes.

Many big-budget movies today are less films than contraptions designed to bedazzle the eye even as they numb the brain. The onset of this trend can be celluloid-dated to 1977. This was the pivotal year in which a promising young director released a film that would transform the industry: His name was George Lucas; his film, *Star Wars*. Lucas was still a filmmaker then, but he was already starting down the path to becoming an impresario of contraptions. In 1977, he still loved his medium and knew how to use its unique resources. After the success of *Star Wars*, however, he allowed his boys at Industrial Light and Magic to lobotomize his cinematic intelligence. A comparison of the first *Star Wars* installment and the most recent one makes the case. *Star Wars* (1977) begins with a spaceship gliding into the frame from its top edge. The ship feels like it is flying over us from behind. It's then followed by a much larger ship, which also noses into the frame from above and then slowly fills the screen with its monstrous bulk. The first ship is a fleeing rebel craft; the second, a destroyer sent in pursuit by the evil empire. There were many ways Lucas could have shot this sequence. He could have flown his toy models across the screen horizontally. He could have put his camera inside the first and then the second, showing us his star-filled spacescape whizzing past their windows. But none of these alternatives would have had the same impact. The simple strategy of bringing his models into the frame from above makes all the difference. Before a word has been spoken, we feel the suffocating weight of the empire's warship as it seemingly hovers over us in its leisurely but inexorable pursuit of the smaller craft. Lucas's models are not what make us gasp; it is the unprecedented way they move into the frame that unnerves us. (At least, I think it is unprecedented. I cannot recall another such sequence before this film.) Now cut to *Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones* (2002). Lucas seems to have forgotten everything he ever knew about his medium's peculiar resources. He is content to set up his camera, keep it as still as possible while shooting his actors, and then digitize his special effects into his scenes afterward. To be sure, his computer-generated gizmos are astonishing, but they are barely memorable beyond a week or two. Why? Because his camera has no life; his montage, no surprise; his compositions, no wit. With unintentional irony, the antimechanist theme of his first film continues to be intoned in his latest episodes, but it now sounds mechanical and rote: Jedi knights are forever exhorting one another to transcend the technology at their disposal and trust their instincts. "Let go. Trust the Force." If Lucas would only abide by this advice, he might still be able to make a film rather than a contraption.

And here is where Siegel's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* might come to the rescue. It's a textbook case of what a talented, film-obsessed director can do with the barest of means. On a budget of $300,000, Siegel made what Clint Eastwood has justly called one of the two or three best B movies ever. (The film so impressed Eastwood that he chose Siegel to be his director in five films, which turned out to be among his best.)

Body Snatchers is far from being a great film, but anyone who has seen it knows that it is unforgettably ingenious.



***Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)**

Produced and Distributed by
Allied Artists Pictures Corporation
and Walter Wanger Productions
Directed by Don Siegel
Screenplay by Jack Finney
and Daniel Mainwaring

What's more, its very deficiencies support my argument. On a 19-day shooting schedule with actors who, in most cases, were no better than competent and with minimal, almost laughable, special effects, Siegel created a minor classic that continues to fascinate new audiences today.

In 1955, RKO Studio executives assigned Siegel to adapt Jack Finney's novel *The Body Snatchers*, which had recently been serialized in *Collier's*. They insisted on a new title, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Siegel thought the title tacky and would have much preferred using a line from *Macbeth*—*Sleep No More*, suggested by the film's star, Kevin McCarthy, brother of Mary. The studio would not hear of it. They wanted a horror film that unmistakably proclaimed itself as such to the matinee and drive-in patrons they expected to make up most of its audience. As it turned out, the title is quite apt in a way the studio tyros never considered. This movie first invades and then colonizes your mind. Once seen, it lingers hauntingly in the recesses of your consciousness. Siegel accomplished this on such limited means by drawing upon the resources of his medium rather than importing special effects.

Finney's narrative used the conceit of extraterrestrials assuming human identity so that they could replace ordinary citi-

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zens down to their every wart, whisker, and wanton tic. Once the replication is complete, the original person is disposed of, and the alien takes his place. These beings are soulless conformists. They are as maddeningly rational as Jonathan Swift's all-too-sensible equines, the Houyhnhnms. Being vegetable in origin, they live and work collectively with no sense of individuality. The allegory is fairly clear. These beings formed in huge seedpods were Finney's metaphor for those who had succumbed to the lure of communist ideology. The pod people look the same, act the same, speak the same as anyone else, but they have an alien agenda. They want to do away with American individualism and capitalist competition. In their place, they mean to install a sensible state-controlled collectivism. In adapting Finney's allegory, Siegel envisioned it in wider terms. While allowing for Finney's political warning, Siegel emphasized the pod people's conformism, their willing submission to a lock-step social engineering, regardless of the "-ism" label under which it would be enforced.

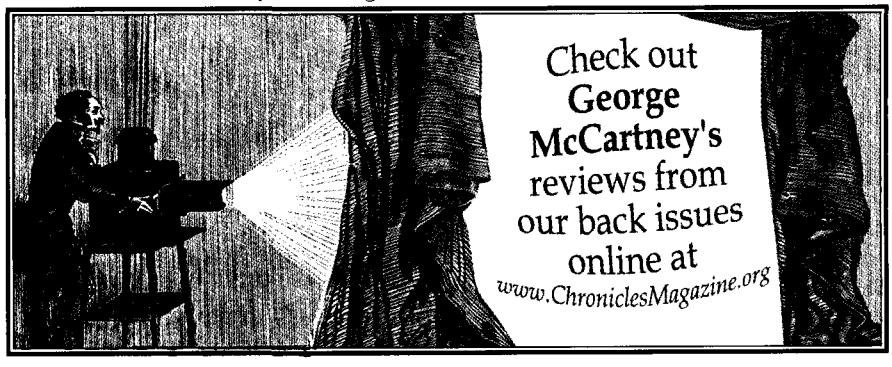
Interesting as it is, this allegory was hardly original, and it certainly does not explain the film's continuing resonance. *Body Snatchers* achieves its remarkable power from another source: Siegel's deft cinematic handling of his material.

Take, for example, a scene in which an unformed pod being shows up in a suburban home, ready to duplicate its owner. The householder has discovered the invader and assumes it is a corpse that someone unaccountably had left in his basement. After seeking help, he and his wife decide to keep watch over the body through the night. The sequence opens unsettlingly with a shot of a pod lying motionless on a pool table in the extreme foreground. In the background, the husband and wife are shown slumped on their bar, having surrendered to sleep during their vigil. Siegel has elected to keep everything in this shot equally in focus, regardless of how near or far it is from the camera. Since film is a two-dimensional medium, this results in a grossly distorted perspective. The alien's head appears to be larger than the couple, who are only 15 or so feet farther from the lens. The head dominates the screen with its ominous presence. Once this is visually established, Siegel has the actor on the pool table slowly open his eyes. The effect is uncanny. Intellectually, we know that we are watching normally proportioned people, but we cannot help feeling the monstrous menace in the creature's simple act of awakening. Without anything being said, we realize that it is assuming the suburbanite's being while he sleeps.

Then there's the scene in which the hero, Miles Benning, first discovers pods giving birth to his own facsimile. In fear and rage, he takes a pitchfork and plunges it into his double, an all-too-obviously rubber mannequin. Just as the tines touch the creature's chest, however, the film cuts to an extreme close-up of a ringing phone, its soundtrack pumped up piercingly. Not having the special effects to make the stabbing look real, Siegel decided to shock us instead with an abrupt edit to a 15-by-20-foot screaming phone. And it works every time you see the film. More than a thrill, this cut perfectly reinforces the film's theme. The pod people began as plants growing on vines. They are organically networked, living and thinking as one. What happens to each happens to all. What better way to reinforce this than the implied analogy with the telephone system, in which each receiver is wired to all the others? When Siegel cuts from the stabbing to the ringing phone, we cannot help making the association, if only subliminally. The phone network stands for the pods sounding the alarm: One of their members is under deadly assault; all are on alert. The imagery of this sequence is made to do double duty: It both shocks us and deepens our understanding of the narrative's implications.

Siegel used many such devices, but the one that I have come to admire most is much quieter. Miles and his girlfriend, Becky, are hiding from the pods in his office. Night has fallen, but they do not turn on the lights for fear of attracting attention. As they talk of the events that have brought them to this pass, they stand before a window, its shade almost fully drawn. Siegel arranged for this shade to be lit from outside, as if by a street light. It becomes a luminous square in the middle of the frame. By placing his actors in front of it, he gives this still moment in his otherwise hurtling narrative an unusual intensity. Musing on what this alien invasion is doing to his community, Miles talks somewhat illogically about how people give in to the pressure to compromise and conform in a society that does not welcome individualists: "In my practice, I see how people have allowed their humanity to drain away. Only it happens slowly instead of all at once. They didn't seem to mind." When Becky insists that this only happens to a few, Miles demurs. "No, all of us, a little bit. We harden our hearts . . . grow callous. Only when we have to fight to stay human do we realize how precious it is to us." Of course, this is the subtext that informs the film's narrative. As Miles says these words to Becky, we see their shadowed faces in sharp profile against the white shade, their own defiant individuality etched on its glowing surface. Clearly, Siegel wanted to suffuse this otherwise still moment with cinematic energy. It was his way of underscoring the theme at the heart of his allegory without quite giving the game away.

This cinematic fusion of metaphor and theme, style and substance, is what intelligent filmmaking is all about. My quarrel with special effects is not that they are bad in themselves. I thoroughly enjoyed Steven Spielberg's dinosaurs lumbering through iterations of *Jurassic Park*. I just could not understand what the robotic human actors were doing in these movies. They seemed entirely unnecessary to what was, after all, a speculative documentary in the *National Geographic* mode. In short, as effects become ever more astonishing, they tend to replace the human element that was once so abundant in what Evelyn Waugh called "the one vital art of the century." Of course, he was talking of the 20th. Who knows what lies ahead in the 21st?



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by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Trench Warfare

War talk was running high when they threw the loaded packs in back of the Gold Pony and left Flagstaff, headed north across the Navajo Reservation. Television and the newspapers had nothing to say about anything except the towering evil of Hubbub Ihnssain, while National Public Radio had suspended *All Things Considered* to concentrate on One Big Thing: Even the scandal of the Christian broadcasting stations had been temporarily set aside. And the President of the United States was appearing almost hourly in the Rose Garden with the rock band Bombs 'n' Roses by his side to proclaim that Hubbub was the Antichrist come to earth. To the Three Amigos, it seemed the right time to get out of Dodge and down into the Big Ditch.

On the way across the reservation, Tob drove carefully to avoid running over sleeping Navajos taking time-out from celebrating the coming war. At the Monument Point trailhead above the North Rim, Mr. Peanut's green Chevrolet pickup truck with the Park Service decals on the doors stood parked. Mr. Peanut was a girl ranger from the Bronx named Doreen who had the perfect peanut shape, though lacking the top hat, cane, and monocle. "She'd look good with the top hat in addition to her pack," Cor said. "If she could carry a pack, I mean."

From Monument Point, they had a view into the tangled green depths of Tapeats Creek on its way to the muddy Colorado; across the main gorge, the Owl Eyes stared blankly from the shadowed wall below the South Rim at Great Thumb Point. The sun was dropping toward the southwestern landline, and the air, at 7,300 feet of elevation, felt chill. The Three Amigos hoisted their packs and grinned at one another.

"Cocktails will be served on the Esplanade in two hours and a half," Tob suggested.

It was steep climbing off the Kaibab, down through the Toroweap to the top of the Coconino Formation, where they traversed below the rim another mile before switchbacking to the Esplanade, its rocky bays glowing in tender shades of orange and rose beneath an ultraviolet sky where early stars quivered. The Three Amigos had crossed the Esplanade halfway among the crooked piñon and juniper trees and were already in sight of the dolomite turrets overlooking the campsite when a brilliant light flashed in the ecliptic of the vanished sun directly ahead, a high-atmospheric explosion whose detonation was absorbed by layers of darkening sky. It was a beautiful burst like that of an artistic Chinese firework, fiery debris hurtling in arcs of smoke away from the central fireball and drifting earthward, lazily.

"It's started already," Tob said. "Chalk one up for Hubbub, I guess. The government doesn't know how to operate its own toys anymore."

Twenty minutes later, they had reached camp and were setting up kitchen on a ledge beneath an overhang of rock when a shadowy figure appeared in the trail. It was Mr. Peanut, her ranger's badge glinting in the light of the full moon, with her ticketbook in one hand and a flashlight in the other.

"Oh, it's *you*," she said when she saw Tob. "What's that you have hanging out on the rock there?"

"That's the Bonnie Blue Flag," Tob told her. "I carried it with me all through the Civil War, fighting for the Confederate States of America. And since."

Mr. Peanut shone her flashlight on the flag. "You mean, it's something Southern?" she asked. "Well, I'm afraid you'll have to take it down right away, sir. It might offend somebody. *I'm* offended."

"The last time you had me take something down, it was my shorts hanging out to dry."

"Please don't be sexist, sir. You're on federal property, remember. And may I see your permit, by the way?"

The moon, a pale wafer above the western horizon, remained up for a good hour after sunrise next morning, as if to keep the restored flag with its single white star company. The Three Amigos ate a good breakfast before making camp secure against Raoul and Ramona, the marauding ravens, and also Mr. Peanut, should she visit them again. They stowed the food supplies in the tents away from the deer mice, and Tob, after consideration, hid the booze with them. (Mr. Peanut had a prepared cautionary lecture, approved by the Park Service, on the dangers of drinking while hiking.) Then they packed the empty water bottles into the day packs and climbed off the Esplanade to Surprise Valley and, from Surprise Valley, down to Deer Creek, where a party that had hiked in from a passing river trip was eating lunch. All the passengers had American flags sticking out of their fanny packs and their ears glued to the transistor radios they brought along.

"What's the score?" Tob asked. He had in mind the Broncos-Packers game.

"We just nuked Baghdad! And a bunch of towelheads set off a string of cherry bombs outside the Israeli consulate in Los Angeles!" one of the river clients told him.

"WAY-TO-GO, U-S-A!" another shouted, and they all joined in: "WAY-TO-GO, U-S-A!"

"War ain't a football game, folks," Tob told them, at which they all quit cheering and looked at him through narrowed eyes.

"You'd look good as a towelhead yourself, buddy," a fat, middle-aged man said, "what with that beard and all."

"You mess with my Pa, I'll wipe *you* up with a towel—you big mound of cold pig lard," Cor promised him.

Following the creek, they hiked on down to the river and Deer Creek Falls, plunging 120 feet to a clear, cold pool, edged by water-polished pebbles and monkeyflower, whose windblown spray stung like sleet. Tob and Chib pulled off their boots and shirts, plunged into the pool, and swam up under the falls, while Cor sat on the beach cooling her feet in the water. When they emerged, hugging one another and guffawing, Mr. Peanut was waiting for the Amigos with her ticketbook out.

"Sir," she began, ignoring Chib and

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addressing Tob directly, her faint mustache quivering, "it is absolutely against regulations to bathe in a pristine waterway, as specified in Article 73, Section 29(iii) of the Rulebook. This pool is utilized by four native species of fish, twelve different species of invertebrates, and thirty-eight species of insect life, all of which have been shown by federally sponsored studies to be adversely affected by human perspiration and other bodily secretions. The federal government is committed to preserving pristine natural environments wherever they exist, within the United States, the Middle East, and . . . everywhere. All fines are payable to the National Park Service, which dedicates the money to its NPS First! emergency fund."

She wrote Tob a ticket for $450, which he tucked into the front of his dripping shorts. His practice room at home was papered with similar citations, which he had so far avoided having to pay by claiming one-sixteenth Hualapai ancestry on his mother's side.

The Three Amigos returned along Deer Creek, where the patriotic boaters were attempting to retrieve one of their party who had fallen into the 150-foot-deep crevasse, up through Surprise Valley, and back to the Esplanade, 4,000 vertical feet above the river, in 90-degree heat reflecting off the cliff wall. They arrived at camp late in the afternoon, and sat in their stiff, salt-rimed clothes, shaded up beneath the overhang, to drink beer before Tob started supper.

"This is how life should be," Chib told the other Amigos. "Your play is your work, your work is your play, and both work and play are forms of prayer. For the person who really knows how to live, *all* of life is prayer."

"I wish I had my guitar," Tob said. "That would have made it absolutely perfect."

"Mr. Peanut would have written you another ticket," Chib told him, "for breaking the pristine silence the Park Service created."

The sky was still golden in the west when the first space objects appeared, hurtling high overhead like white-hot stones hurled by giant catapults, traveling west to east. "Looks like *TakingIt.com* for Hubbub," Tob observed, chasing his beer with a swig of whiskey.

"Or maybe it's North Korea doing Washington from behind," Chib said.

"Do you suppose they've got all that stuff up there going round and round and they can't bring it down when they want it?" Cor asked.

The lightshow between moonrise and sunup was spectacular, a half-century's worth of space R&D circling the planet at incredible speeds and coming, finally, from all directions to score the dome of the heavens with long rips and tears of fire. As with the explosion the previous evening, no sound was audible, but at daylight a pall of dust mixed with smoke shrouded the world at high altitude. "Cheney's oil fields could be on fire by now," Tob said at breakfast. "Come on, man—eat up! I'd like to make it over to Thunder before nuclear winter sets in."

The Three Amigos, carrying their empty bottles and a light lunch, took an hour and a half to hike down the switchbacks and across Surprise Valley to Thunder Spring, a waterwall dropping 90 feet to a series of pools set in a green oasis of oak and box elder in the Muav Formation beneath the Redwall to form the headwaters of Thunder River. They climbed up among the exposed tree roots to the bottom of the falls and sat on the bank to eat, taking the cool spray on their faces and watching as a variety of tiny bird flew straight into the cataract. "Looking for bugs underwater," Tob explained. The Amigos had just popped the three lunch cylinders they'd chilled in the icy water when they heard heavy breathing at their backs and, looking round, spied Mr. Peanut leaning on her stick.

"Hi there," Tob greeted her. "Care for a cold beer? You look like you could go for one."

Mr. Peanut's eyes were dull with fatigue, and her sweat-darkened shirt was plastered to her belly and back.

"I'm on duty, sir. Are you aware that the surgeon general has determined that drinking alcoholic beverages while hiking causes dangerous dehydration in pregnant persons, and . . . ?"

A sonic boom followed directly by an aerodynamic whine interrupted her, followed by a terrific concussion as some large aluminum thing crashed onto Great Thumb Point, taking out a sizable chunk of cliff that included the Owl Eyes and sending it crashing onto the patriotic boating party below. Mr. Peanut appeared oblivious to the disturbance.

"According to Article 54, Section 41(vi), of the Rulebook, all nonbiodegradable—as well as biodegradable—refuse must be packed out by the undersigned permittee. I have to remind you that the Park Service, a branch of the federal government, is dedicated to protecting pristine natural environments wherever they . . . "

Tob stood and placed his empty beer can on end on the ground. He flattened it with a single stamp of his hiking boot and chucked the compressed medallion at Mr. Peanut. "I'm not pregnant," he told her, "but, here—*you* carry it out."

In camp that evening, the Three Amigos sat over *filets mignon* and red wine, observing the aerial bombardment that had intensified to such a degree that it seemed as if all the so-called civilized nations on earth had resorted to flinging every available piece of mechanical scrap at one another. Now the visual display was accompanied by remote booms and a confused, underlying roar, like that of a giant forest fire sucking the oxygen from the atmosphere. Even past moonrise, the horizon glowed with the light from distant conflagrations burning beneath shelves of greasy cloud advancing from the west to blot the unfathomable, sempiternal pattern of the brilliant stars.

"I told Barbara to join us down here if things got really bad up top," Tob said worriedly. "I hope she's on her way by now."

"*Before* now," Cor corrected him.

They were up several hours before sunrise to strike camp and load the packs for the climb out. The sky was not as active as it had been throughout the night, but the glow beneath the spreading smoke pall was pervasive. The Amigos drank a cup of coffee and shared a chocolate bar among them before they got on the trail, marching steadily in the track of the headlamps.

They had crossed the Esplanade and started up the switchbacks rising to the North Rim when a light appeared ahead and far above them, but below the paler sky where it rested on top of the black canyon wall. The light bobbled steadily downhill, until presently Barbara appeared behind it in the trail, carrying an enormous pack on her back and, in her hand, a guitar case.

"Hello, dear," she told her husband, holding the battered case forward. "I knew you'd never be able to survive without this. It's terrible up there, by the way. You can't imagine *how* terrible."

Tob accepted the guitar from her and turned about to face the Esplanade, already paling in the early light.

"Suppose we go on back to camp," he suggested, "and I'll make us a *real* breakfast."

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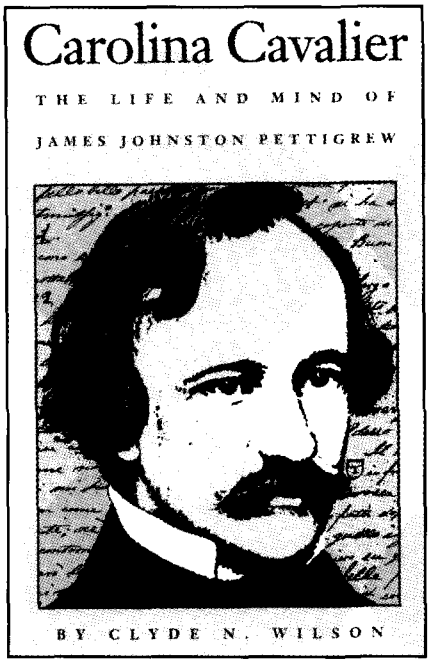

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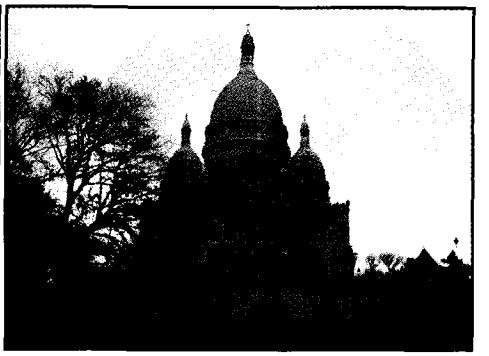

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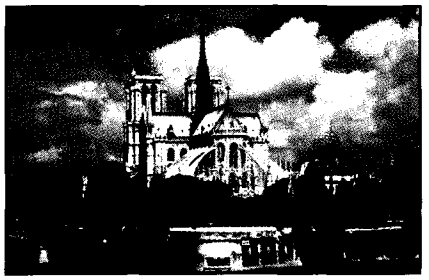

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